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CHINA.

VOL. II.

CHINESE VILLA.

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OLIVER & BOYD, EDINBURGH.

AN

ISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE

ACCOUNT

OF

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CHINA;

ITS ANCIENT AND MODERN HISTORY, LANGUAGE, LITERATURE, RELIGION, GOVERNMENT, INDUSTRY, MANNERS, AND SOCIAL STATE; INTERCOURSE WITH EUROPE FROM THE EARLIEST AGES; MISSIONS AND EMBASSIES TO THE IMPERIAL COURT; BRITISH AND FOREIGN COMMERCE; DIRECTIONS TO NAVIGATORS; STATE OF MATHEMATICS AND ASTRONOMY; SURVEY OF ITS GEOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY, BOTANY, AND ZOOLOGY.

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AN

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE ACCOUNT OF CHINA.

CHAPTER I.

Language and Literature of China.

Great Importance attached to Learning in China—Its Progress and Direction, as compared with that of Europe—Striking Peculiarities—The Language—Principles on which it is formed—Illustrates the Origin of Languages in general—Specimens of Chinese Characters, Ancient and Modern—Their Number—No Declensions—How their Place is supplied—Language less difficult than commonly supposed—Modes of Writing, Printing, and Binding—Literary Compositions—The Y-king—Its singular and obscure Character—Confucius—His Life—Exposed to Injuries and Persecutions—His Death—Character—Principal Works—Mencius—His Life and Writings—Lao-tse—Obscurity which involves his Tenets—Sages of the Forest of Bamboo—Tchu-hi—His Life and Works—Chinese Physical Science—Natural History—Medicine—Circulation of the Blood—Inoculation—Ignorance of Anatomy—History—The Shoo-king—Extracts—Confucius' Tchun-tsieou—Ma-twan-lin—Poetry—Its general Cultivation—Versification—Ancient Poems in the Shi-king—Modern Poetry—The Drama—Mode of cultivating it—Nature of the Performances—Novels—Nature of these Compositions—Cultivation of Literature by British Residents.

In attempting to convey to the reader a correct idea of the people of China, we must assign to let-

ters a more prominent place than if we were treating of any other nation. Literature, which elsewhere forms only a brilliant ornament at the summit of the social edifice, is here the foundation on which the fabric rests; and the whole system of the empire is professedly regulated in accordance with the books and maxims of its ancient sages. Thus knowledge becomes the road to power, to wealth, and to greatness. "The literati," says Dr Morrison, "are the gentry, the magistrates, the governors, the negotiators, the ministers of China."* The absence of hereditary rank, and even of any class possessing great riches, leaves the field entirely open to this species of distinction. When the parent exhorts his child to attend to his lessons, he can tell him with truth that he may thus become a powerful mandarin, and one of the first personages in the state. From these causes a degree of veneration is attached even to the humblest objects connected with the art of writing. Paper, pencil, ink, and the marble on which this last is dissolved, are called the four precious things;† and the manufacture of them is considered a liberal occupation. A passage in a recently-translated drama strikingly expresses the brilliant career supposed to be opened up to a village-schoolmaster, as compared even with that of a prosperous merchant. "If you are successful in trade, from a little money you make much; but if you study letters, your plebeian garments are changed for a soldier's gown. If you compare the two, how much superior is the literary life to that of the merchant or tradesman! When

* Chinese Miscellany (London, 1825), p. 43.
† Astley's Voyages, vol. iv. p. 161.

you shall have acquired celebrity, men will vie with each other in their admiration of you. Over your head will be carried the round umbrella; before your horse will be marshalled the two files of attendants. Think of the toil of those who traffic, and you will see the difference."*

This respect for letters might at first view appear to place China, in point of civilisation, above the most improved countries of the West. In Britain, though eminent acquirements in science and literature do indeed render their possessor an object of public estimation, they do not open a way to wealth or power, nor do they necessarily raise him to any higher rank in society. Yet it is very remarkable, that the attainments of the Chinese in these elevated pursuits have not corresponded, either to the importance attached to them, or to the distinction which they confer. In all the exertions of genius or science, they have been left decidedly behind by the nations of Europe, who follow these as only secondary objects. This circumstance appears the more singular when we observe, that the mechanical arts, prosecuted by individuals on their own plan and for their own profit, have in some branches attained an excellence which European industry has only recently, and with difficulty, rivalled. Civil liberty seems to rank above every other impulse in promoting the progress of the human mind. When letters and philosophy become a matter of state, a path is traced out, and certain standards are established, which must be implicitly followed. New opinions, which in Europe would be mere subjects of discussion and curiosity, create in China a political agitation, which

* Davis' Heir in his Old Age (12mo, London, 1817), pp. 51, 52.

excites alarm in a government always jealous of innovation. The qualification for degrees and other honours is understood to consist in the candidate being found completely versant in what is already known, not in his striking out new lights upon any subject.* To such causes, according to Parennin, the unimproved state of astronomical knowledge in the particular department charged with the construction of the imperial calendar may be attributed. Whoever suggests any improvement is allowed indeed to state his views; but these are immediately referred to the Li-pou Board; and if that body, who almost always adhere to established principles, make an unfavourable report, disgrace and perhaps punishment is the probable result.† Hence this branch of Chinese science remains in so depressed a condition, that for several centuries it has been necessary to employ foreigners in executing the duties connected with astronomy. Those philosophers, in fact, who threw the greatest lustre on the literature of China appeared in times when the country was plunged in anarchy; and they carried on their speculations amid neglect and even proscription from the ruling powers.

Although the learning of this great nation, notwithstanding the encouragements bestowed upon it, has failed to attain any high distinction, and has been unable to rival the depth of thought and the flights of genius which characterize that of Europe, it has yet strong claims on the attention of the enlightened inquirer. It is the literature of a vast portion of the human species, and is the result of ex-

* Morrison's Dictionary, vol. i. p. 759.
† Lettres Edifiantes, tome xxi. pp. 94, 95.

tensive labours, continued during many successive ages. The very circumstance of its breathing a spirit, and being developed in forms, entirely different from those assumed in the West, has indeed prevented any entire Chinese work from becoming popular in this country; but the same consideration may, perhaps, increase the interest of the general summary we are about to give, and in which, after attempting to explain some leading principles, we shall present a few striking specimens of the several kinds of composition. The profound philological labours of Marshman, Morrison, Klaproth, Rémusat; the translations made by the Romish missionaries, and inserted in their voluminous publications; together with those recently executed by Davis, Thoms, Collie, and other ingenious Englishmen, will afford very adequate materials for the proposed survey.

In considering this subject, we must begin with a view of the written language, which forms the basis of the intellectual system of China, and is by far its most striking and peculiar feature. That sublime art, by which thought is embodied and communicated to distant ages and nations, has, from the earliest times of the empire, been an object of constant and anxious study. The most illustrious princes, the founders of the monarchy, rested their fame chiefly upon their share in its invention; and many changes and improvements have been successively introduced. Compared to the languages of every other literary nation, whether in the East or West, that of China, it must be acknowledged, labours under great and obvious defects; yet the researches by which its structure has been recently developed, seem

to prove that it is neither so imperfect, nor impeded by so many difficulties as has been generally imagined. Some of its admirers have not hesitated to assert, that it is the noblest, most beautiful, and most expressive of all written forms of speech, and fitted even for becoming a universal medium of thought. Such lofty pretensions cannot, indeed, be supported; but a view of the principles upon which it has been framed, will throw a very interesting light on the progress of that important art, by which the ideas of the human mind are made visible to the senses, —a process which, among the Western nations, was completed at a period so remote, that scarcely a vestige of it can now be discovered.

The most simple, and probably in every case the earliest method of recording events, was by drawing or painting. In Mexico, at the time of its conquest by the Spaniards, this system was employed to a great extent. The ships of the invaders, their persons, and their actions, were all represented in coloured despatches sent to the imperial court. But such a plan, exhibiting only one scene, and requiring a space inconveniently large, could neither express the succession of events, nor supply the place of verbal statement. The next step, therefore, was to execute sketches of each particular object in succession. These became, as it were, painted words, and being placed in due order, one after another, composed a discourse or narrative. But as a finished picture for every fact or idea would have been laborious and cumbrous, there was substituted a slight outline, degenerating often into a mere conventional symbol. Such are the hieroglyphics of Egypt, which, it would appear, were originally sculptured upon stone, and with

which the walls of the ancient temples and tombs in that celebrated country are still covered.

When, however, by the process now stated, the attempt was made to frame separate signs for all the varied objects of nature and of human thought, these must soon have swelled to a perplexing and inconvenient amount. Hence, in course of time, the picture-system was, in the countries of the West, entirely thrown aside, and a written language constructed on the principle of expressing by symbols the sounds of the spoken dialect. These signs or letters, of which a very moderate number was found sufficient, composed what is termed an alphabet, the early introduction of which was of the most signal benefit in the diffusion of knowledge. The curious steps by which, in Egypt, the transition was made from hieroglyphic to alphabetical notation, have been traced by the recent researches of Young and Champollion, and are illustrated by Dr Russell, in his work on Egypt, in a very satisfactory manner.*

The written language of China was originally framed on similar principles with the Mexican and the Egyptian, but under a somewhat different form. While the one represented objects by painting in colours, and the other by sculpture in relief (or an imitation of it), the Chinese never employed any mode except outlines drawn by a pencil on wood or paper. But the striking peculiarity is, that while the tongue has been cultivated for thousands of years, there has never been the slightest departure from the original system of expressing every object and thought by a separate character.

* Edinburgh Cabinet Library, No. III., View of Ancient and Modern Egypt, p. 181-215.

No approach has ever been made to a *phonetic* alphabet, or one like our own, expressing the sounds of the human voice as used in speaking. Considering the various and decided changes actually made in the written language, and the important inventions in respect to the mechanical implements employed, this remarkable fact can scarcely, we think, be imputed to mere veneration for antiquity. It seems rather connected with peculiarities in the disposition and habits of the Chinese. The people of the West, and especially the Greeks, may be generally characterized as speaking nations. Oratory, discourse, and conversation, were the favourite modes of communicating ideas; and hence many of their most valued remains are harangues and dialogues taken from the mouth of the sage by his disciples or admirers. The Chinese, on the contrary, have been always a writing nation. "They never," said an Arab traveller in the ninth century, "answer by word of mouth to any business whatever, nor will they give any answer at all to any thing that is not written." The commands of men in power are made known by written placards borne before the officers who are charged with their execution. The counsels of ministers to their sovereign are submitted in written documents of peculiar name and form. There is little of what we call society, where men meet to enjoy themselves, or to display their powers in familiar intercourse. The most important part even of their formal visits are the written cards, announcing, accepting, and returning thanks for them. Speech is considered altogether a secondary and subordinate mode of communication. The idea, therefore, of making the written subservient to

the spoken language, seems never once to have occurred to the mind of a Chinese.

The hieroglyphic quality, or that of forming actual images of the objects to be expressed, can now be very faintly traced in the Chinese characters. De Guignes has even denied that they ever possessed it, and has advanced the extraordinary hypothesis, that they were corruptions of the Phœnician alphabet. The examples, however, of the early symbols supplied by Amiot, and more recently by Klaproth and Morrison,* remove every doubt that they were representations of the things intended to be expressed. As a curious view is thus afforded of the processes employed in the first formation of a written language, we shall extract from these learned authors a few specimens, beginning with those which delineate simple objects :—

The sun.

The moon.

Stars.

The face.

The ear.

The eye.

The mouth.

The teeth.

The heart.

The hand.

An elephant.

A lion.

A wild ox.

A tame ox.

* Amiot, Mémoires, tome i. p. 306, &c. Klaproth, Mémoires relatifs à l'Asie (2 vols 8vo, Paris, 1826), tome ii. p. 101-131. Morrison's Chinese Miscellany (4to, London, 1825), Plates 1, 2, 3.

A horse.

A sheep.

A fowl.

A bird.

A fish.

Grass.

Stalks of corn.

Grains of rice.

Branch of a tree.

Plantations.

Water.

Rain.

The above are mere examples of drawing, exhibiting, with a greater or less approach to accuracy, simple external objects. When qualities, abstract ideas, sentiments, and actions, were to be represented, the inventors of the language were obliged to exert their ingenuity, in order to discover a figurative form by which these could be expressed. The following appear to us among the most curious illustrations of the modes employed in attaining this end :—

Brightness (sun and moon combined).

Thunder (zig-zag movement).

Morning (sun shedding dew).

Neighbour (two neighbouring enclosures).

Dignitary or vassal (the cap of ceremony).

Order of battle.

To shoot arrows.

To view with fear (position of the eyes).

To fight (two hands grasping weapons).

Distress (stoppage of water in irrigation).

To distribute (water spread in different directions).

To struggle (two hands grasping the same thing).

Lofty (an elevated terrace).

To connect (beams and rafters joined).

Sweet (something held in the mouth).

To guide or direct (a hand grasping something at top).

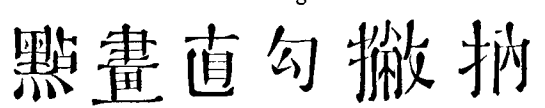
To subdue (battle-axe).

To deceive (double heart).

By a gradual change, however, these signs have been entirely new-modelled, and the imitative quality upon which they were founded has almost wholly disappeared. It seems difficult at first to discover the motive for which that advantage was sacrificed; since the modern writing appears to be neither more beautiful nor more easily executed, but rather in both respects the contrary. On close inspection, we perceive that all these apparently

complex characters are formed of a few lines, not straight, but such as can be readily produced by one dash of a hair-pencil,—the Chinese instrument of writing. These, under their most simple aspect, amount only to the following six,* the last of which is little more than a point or comma.

The above, however, by being drawn of various lengths, and in different directions, can be multiplied into fifty-six, all of which have been included by M. Rémusat in the following table :—†



M. Amiot‡ has enabled us to compare some of the ancient and modern characters, and thus to acquire an idea how the latter have been framed out of the former, to which they still bear some resemblance, even when they no longer retain any to the original object. Thus :—

	Ancient.	Modern.
Tortoise,		
Fishes,		
Branch,		

* Davis, Trans. Asiat. Soc. vol. i. p. 304, Plate iv. No. iv.

† Essai sur la Langue et la Littérature Chinoise (8vo, Paris, 1811), Plate iii. No. xx.

‡ Mémoires, tome i. Plates 5, 6, 7.

	Ancient.	Modern.
Middle,		中
Suspended,		垂
Vegetable shoot; fork,		丫
Moon,		月
Square,		方
Round,		圓
Mouth,		口
Grass,		草
Cup of wine,		壺
Bow,		弓

The number of characters in the Chinese language has been rated variously, as well as greatly exaggerated. Magalhaens stated it at 54,409, which has been raised by some to 60,000, 70,000, and 80,000. This last estimate Sir George Staunton considers the lowest which can be formed. Dr Montucci asserts, that the great Chinese dictionary, called the Hai-pien, contains 51,129 current, and 209,770 old or obsolete characters, making in all, 260,899.* But Dr Marshman, on a careful analysis of the last imperial lexicon in thirty-two volumes, which was the joint

* Fourmont, Meditationes Sinicæ (4to, Paris, 1737), p. 18. Staunton, vol. iii. p. 418. Montucci, Letters on Chinese Literature (London, 1805).

work of nearly a hundred individuals, found it to contain 43,496, of which about 12,000 were not comprehended in any former edition. But so great a number of these were obsolete or incorrect, introduced merely with the view of referring the student to the proper characters, that he does not believe the whole number of effective and useful words exceeds 30,000.*

This immense host of symbols does not, however, constitute a confused and undistinguishable mass, amid which the student is liable to be bewildered and lost. A clue has been found, by which he may in some degree trace his path. All these forms, on examination, prove to be compounded of 214 original or simple ones. These *keys*, as they are called, represent the grandest objects of nature, and those most obvious to the senses;—the sun, moon, trees, plants, animals, human beings, and the relations of kindred. When complex ideas, qualities, or actions, are to be expressed, two are joined together, and often these two to a third, and the three to a fourth, yet still so combined as to have the appearance of only a single character. Thus,—

一 one, with 大 great, makes 天 the great one, or heavenly ruler. 人 man, with 中 middle, makes 仲 middle brother of three. 禾 corn in the ear, with 刀 a reaping-knife, makes 利 profit, advantage. 心 heart, with 中

* Marshman's Clavis Sinica (4to, Serampore, 1814), p. 32.

middle, makes rending of the heart, grief. arrow, with mouth, makes knowledge. This added to a pearl, makes introduction (giving knowledge of) by a present.

The keys of the Chinese language thus correspond to the roots of the Sanscrit and to the primitives of the Greek. It would, however, be a mistake to imagine, that the mere knowledge of the simple characters will always enable the reader to understand the compound ones. The case is the same with respect to the fundamental terms in the tongues of the West. It may be remarked, for the sake of the mere English reader, that in the compound words, understand, with-hold, up-right, the two parts may be completely understood, while, without explanation, not the slightest idea can be formed of their import when thus united. In the speech of the same strange people, too, the connexion is often formed by habits and ideas so remote from ours, as to leave to a European student little chance of tracing it. Thus, among us the love of offspring is not so ardent that the union of the characters *tsé* and *nyú*, a son and daughter, should suggest the idea of good, or happiness in general. The union of *female* and *heart* could never, by European gallantry, be understood to signify *anger*. Nor could the characters, *ear*, *mouth*, *lord*, at once be understood to signify *a sage*. Indeed, by much the greater number of the compound characters quoted by Dr Marshman have not

so direct a relation as those now mentioned to their primitives, obscure as they must appear. The idea, therefore, which has been sometimes held out, that a thorough acquaintance with the keys includes the power of reading the language, or even greatly facilitates its acquisition, has very little foundation in truth. Almost every one of the compounds must still form a distinct subject of study and recollection, in the same manner as the words in European languages.

Another striking peculiarity in this remarkable vocabulary is, that every term is completely indeclinable. There is neither case, gender, number, mode, nor tense;* none of those inflections which, to the classic reader, appear almost essential to the existence of human speech. Yet it does not appear why, even in characters addressed solely to the sight, marks might not have been annexed for the purpose of exhibiting these important distinctions. Perhaps this deficiency also may be connected with the preference so decidedly given to written compared with spoken language. The numerous and varied inflexions employed by the Greeks, were, we suspect, mainly prompted by their passionate love of oratory and oral communication. By the facilities which these afforded of forming long and sonorous words, and dispensing with small particles and appendages, they were enabled to produce that full and majestic volume of sound which distinguishes their language. The English, among the Western nations, seem to come nearest to the Chinese in this respect; and perhaps this, too, may be partly owing to their comparative taciturnity and preference of plain sense

* Marshman's Clavis Sinica, p. 186-189.

over the flowers of oratory. In point of fact, however, by the use of prepositions or auxiliary verbs, and often without them, ambiguity may be completely avoided. Chinese scholars have an ample store of these appendages, to be applied whenever they appear necessary; yet they seem better pleased when the meaning can be fully communicated without them.

In regard to *cases*, Dr Marshman gives several examples of prepositive characters by which the power of the genitive is expressed; yet more commonly the noun which stands in this relation is indicated, by its being merely placed before the other,* —a usage by no means foreign to the English language, in which such expressions as York Cathedral, the London Magistrates, the Kent Militia, are extremely common. The dative, too, is marked by its position before the verb;† and here, also, an analogy occurs at least in the colloquial language of our own country; for it is by no means unusual to say, I sent George the book, or I gave Anne the gown. The ablative is necessarily indicated by prepositions. The absence of a plural form‡ is certainly a more serious defect; at the same time, we may observe, even in the few English words which are in the like predicament, that the numerals prefixed render the expression sufficiently intelligible; as, twenty sheep, many deer, a troop of horse. With regard to gender, the Chinese do not usually apply it in any figurative sense, but only where there exists a real difference of sex. In that case, if nothing be expressed, the male is usually understood; if the female be meant,

* Clavis Sinica, p. 220. † Ibid. pp. 225, 226.
‡ Ibid. p. 210-217.

it is indicated by appropriate terms, and too often by those expressing the comparative contempt with which the sex is regarded in China.* With respect to tenses, they are expressed in English so little by inflexions, and so much by auxiliary verbs, that the entire exclusion of the former cannot appear to us very extraordinary. The Chinese have for the present, *kin*, now; for the perfect, *keè*, done, or *hwan*, complete; for the future, *khúng*, to will; and *tsyang*, about to be done. They find, however, that in a great proportion of instances, even these can be dispensed with, and that the mere scope of the sentence sufficiently indicates the time at which the event took place. Such are the examples given by Dr Marshman:—Confucius *die* at the age of seventy-three; at the beginning, *I hear* them.† We may sometimes observe, in foreigners speaking what is called broken English, the verb treated in a similar manner; as, "Me see him yesterday; me see him just now; me see him to-morrow;" in which, however odd the expression sounds, the context is sufficient to remove all ambiguity.

The circumstance, however, which has chiefly attracted notice with regard to the written language of China, is the extreme difficulty supposed to attend its acquisition. This has been represented as so very great, that the natives are obliged to spend most part of their lives in attaining a knowledge which, after all, is said to be imperfect; while, for this reason, foreigners are completely precluded from any intimate acquaintance with Chinese literature. The French missionaries, though several of them became profoundly versant in it, took little pains to dispel

* Clavis Sinica, p. 208. † Ibid. pp. 434, 435, 441, 445.

this impression. Magalhaens no doubt asserted, at an early period, that the language might be acquired both easily and speedily;* and learned men of the present day, who have manfully faced its difficulties, have overcome them with surprising facility. M. Rémusat, though living in Europe, and without the aid even of a dictionary, contrived in a few years to become a profound Chinese scholar. Drs Marshman and Morrison have been able, without interrupting other important duties, to make themselves masters of the language, and they treat with derision the terrors in which the study has been hitherto arrayed. Mr Davis, after two years' residence at Canton, and while his time was occupied with official engagements, acquired such a proficiency in it, that he translated with success several native works.† In fact, on looking narrowly into the subject, we shall find, on the one hand, that the structure of Chinese does not present such insuperable obstacles, and, on the other, that the alphabetic system does not secure so many advantages as might at first view be imagined.

When we say that the English tongue contains only twenty-six characters, and the Chinese at least 30,000, and suppose the difficulty of acquiring the latter to be in the ratio of these two numbers, it must indeed appear appalling. But the truth is, the knowledge of the mere letters of an alphabet forms only a primary step in the process of learning to read. They are first to be joined into syllables, next into words of smaller or greater length, and long habit is still required before these can promptly suggest to the mind the correspond-

* Astley's Collection, vol. iv. p. 195.

† Barrow, in Supplement to Encyclopædia Britannica, vol. iii. p. 91, Art. China.

ing sounds and ideas. When we consider, moreover, the very imperfect connexion between the spoken and written language in most of the countries of Europe, and particularly in England, it will appear that they can scarcely be read with fluency, without a special exercise of memory upon almost every word; the very thing which is represented as rendering the acquisition of the Chinese so arduous. If, again, we make the comparison with the study of a tongue entirely foreign, the parallel will be found still more complete. The latter language cannot be learned until every word has become a distinct idea, or object of memory, exactly in the same manner as the various characters in the Chinese. The only difference is, that the ideas in the one case are those of the eye, in the other those of the ear; and, says Dr Morrison, "ideas reaching the mind by the eye are quicker, more striking, and vivid, than those which reach the mind by the slower progress of sound." He hesitates not to add, "The Chinese fine writing darts upon the mind with a vivid flash, a force and a beauty, of which alphabetic language is incapable."* Admitting that these expressions may be tinctured by the enthusiasm of a successful student, there seems yet room to conclude, that the difference between the two modes of receiving impressions may not be very remarkable. The Chinese is said, indeed, to be more copious than the European languages; but this circumstance, we suspect, with regard to facility of acquisition, is rather in its favour. It arises from each character bearing a single and precise meaning; while with us one word has often several different senses, and thus a smaller number on the whole suffices. But

* Dictionary, Introduct. p. xi.

we must recollect that these various significations, having sometimes very little affinity, require each a separate exercise of memory, nearly as much as if they were so many distinct words; and the perplexity occasioned to the learner, in finding out which is the sense in any particular passage, will more than counterbalance the relief experienced from a diminution in the number of vocables. Again, although the whole amount of characters be about 30,000, it is observed that 2000 will enable a European to convey ideas upon any common topic, and that there are not a greater number used in the penal code of the empire. With 10,000, any work may be understood that does not treat on a technical subject.* Dr Marshman does not estimate at more than five or six years the period usually spent in study by a young Chinese before he is prepared to enter on his examinations for the dignity of mandarin. This, too, comprehends the reading of the standard classical books, upon which he is then examined; and it is justly observed, that a youth in this country generally spends ten years at school and college, before he is qualified to speak and write Latin with propriety.†

The zealous votaries of the Chinese language have not been content with denying the vast difficulties which appeared to environ it; they have also advanced pretensions which would raise it to a pre-eminence over every other. Its written characters, it is said, are fitted for becoming a uni-

* Morrison's Chinese Miscellany, p. 2. Essai sur la Langue et la Littérature Chinoises, par J. P. Abel Rémusat (12mo, Paris, 1811), p. 60.

† Marshman's Clavis Sinica, p. 563, 564.

versal language, which might be used in combination with all other spoken tongues, and be "clothed with the greatest advantage in the varied enunciation of the West."* It might thus form a general medium of communication between the learned in all quarters of the world. This is exemplified by the Arabic numerals, and might be still better illustrated by a reference to the algebraic symbols, by means of which extensive trains of reasoning are carried on, equally intelligible to men of all nations, though expressed by each in different words. We suspect, however, that the very idea of a written language, applicable to more than one spoken dialect, is quite fanciful. It may be employed for expressing mathematical ideas, which are simple, precise, and always uniform; and might perhaps extend to some of the more common external objects. But all terms expressive of emotion, sentiment, and even of the habits and relations of life, receive a peculiar shade from national peculiarities, and have no exact synonymes in any other tongue. Above all, the difference of idiom and construction would render it impossible for characters expressing the mere words to convey the sense to a foreigner. We need only give Dr Morrison's own literal translation of a very good aphorism:—"With reprove man the heart, reprove self; then few errors." How could a European reader interpret this to mean,—"With the same feeling that you reprove others, reprove yourself; and you will commit few errors?"† He certainly could not do so without having studied the idiom of the Chinese

* Morrison's Chinese Miscellany, p. 1. Marshman's Clavis Sinica, p. 4.

† Miscellany, p. 29.

language, the very thing the necessity of which it is proposed to obviate. Of course, every embellishment connected with the beauty of sound would be thus entirely lost,—a material disadvantage in poetical and ornamental composition. The only case, as it appears to us, to which such a system could be at all applicable, is that of a mercantile nomenclature, where the objects and even transactions are simple, every where the same, and not very numerous; so that there might perhaps be formed a series of characters, equally intelligible to all nations, by which their intercourse might be considerably facilitated. The Chinese commerce, however, is itself so limited and peculiar, both in its objects and the mode of conducting it, that there could be no chance of their language being advantageously applied to this purpose in other parts of the world. The Western nations would be obliged to form one for themselves, accommodated to the more extended range of their transactions.

Another excellence which some have claimed for the Chinese language is that of painting objects to the eye instead of representing them by mere symbols. M. Rémusat hesitates not to extol "these picturesque characters, which, instead of steril and conventional signs of pronunciation, present to the eye the objects themselves, expressed and figured under all their essential attributes;" and he adds, "This is one of the principal merits of the Chinese language, acknowledged by all who have made any progress in the study of it." But, from the details given above respecting the written characters now in use, it will be evident that the delineation of real objects, always very rude, has almost entirely

disappeared. In a few instances, some faint traces may still be discovered, as in those quoted by M. Rémusat, of *tang*, flood, and *tao*, inundation; but, in by far the greater number, the resemblance exists only in the imagination of the learned writer. In this conclusion we are fully supported by Dr Morrison, who candidly admits, that his favourite language has lost almost every trace of a pictorial character.*

In order to lay before the reader all that is peculiar in this extraordinary form of speech, we must mention the means of oral communication, which are as meagre and defective as its written instruments are copious and exuberant. The spoken tongue consists altogether of monosyllables, and those exceedingly few. Bayer made them only 352, which Fourmont raised to 383; and Morrison, having collected a few more, has estimated the whole at 411.† These, indeed, by the use of four accents, are multiplied to 1644; but even this amount corresponds very inadequately with 30,000, the lowest estimate of the written characters. Le Comte remarks with surprise, that he is able, in a single sheet, to comprehend all the spoken words of this ancient and celebrated language. We cannot forbear observing, however, that the uncommon poverty of the spoken language, like the extreme difficulty of the written one, has been very much exaggerated. These 1644 words are, in fact, syllables or primitives, two descriptions of terms which, in the original state of human speech, nearly coincide. When one of them is insufficient to express the desired idea another is annexed; and these

* Miscellany, p. 4. † Ibid. p. 16.

"married words,"* as a missionary ingeniously designates them, are, in fact, neither more nor less than the compound terms which form the greater portion of ordinary tongues. Thus, *moo* signifies a tree or timber,—*moo-lyau* means timber for building,—*moo-lan*, bars of timber,—*moo-hya*, a chest,—*moo-syang*, a press,—*moo-tsyang*, a carpenter;† being all really compound words, as much as,—woodman, woodlark, woodbine, woodcutter, woodcock, and similar terms in English. The same may be said of Mr Barrow's examples of *foo-chin*, father; *moo-chin*, mother. Even in the very inartificial arrangement mentioned by Sir George Staunton, where, *moo*, signifying a tree, *moo-moo* is a thicket, *moo-moo-moo*, a forest; the two last are still real compounds. Thus the Chinese, after all, even in their spoken tongue, possess resources equal to those of other nations. Still it is a most singular circumstance, that while in very rude dialects these compounds have been run into each other, and their angles, as it were, rounded off, so as to combine into one word, no such union has taken place in Chinese; and its primitive syllables continue still to be sounded completely like separate words. This seems accountable only by the circumstance, already mentioned, that a paramount importance is attached to writing, and a very secondary place allowed to speech. Hence, apparently, while the improvement of the former has, from the earliest ages, been incessantly studied, the latter has been almost totally neglected. Dr Marshman is of opinion that the oral language of China, at the present moment, is the

* Mémoires, tome viii. pp. 150, 151.
† Astley's Collection, vol. iv. p. 193.

very same that it was 3000 years ago. Of this he finds a strong presumption in the rhymes used in the poems composed at that early period, and which continue still equally good.* Very learned men have a singular mode of escaping from this colloquial poverty; namely, by delineating the outline of the written characters with their finger in the air,—a mode of communication which it requires equal proficiency to understand and to execute.

The spoken sounds in this language consist of twenty-one initials, which begin a syllable, and twelve finals, which end it. These coincide nearly, though not entirely, with consonants and vowels. Among the former a good number are compounds, and B, D, M, R, are entirely wanting, while N is used only as a final. The natives, in their dictionaries, though they generally arrange the words according to the keys, and in reference to the written characters, have a mode of pointing out the pronunciation. They employ twenty-one very well known words, which begin with the respective initials, and twelve equally familiar, which end with different finals; and by annexing one of each to the character, show both how to begin and end the pronunciation of it.† The words thus used, as Dr Russell has observed, approach very nearly to the character of an alphabet, and, with small changes, might easily be made to supply its place; but this is an idea which never enters the mind of a Chinese, who, it is said, cannot conceive how signs which have no meaning can, by their combination, ever become significant.

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* Clavis Sinica, p. 84. † Ibid. pp. 89-99, 107-117.

The mechanical processes, by which writing and printing are executed, ought not to be overlooked. In these, again, we find that this people, once greatly in advance of the European nations, are now left far behind. Bamboo, cut very thin, at first supplied the place of paper; afterwards silk or cotton-cloth was used. The invention of paper itself is referred by Dr Morrison to the first century. It was then manufactured from mashed bamboo, but afterwards from cotton-cloth, which nearly assimilates it to the European. Though beautiful, however, it is of so delicate a texture, that only one side can be written or printed upon. For writing, pointed pieces of wood were originally employed; even the works of Confucius consisted of rude marks made on boards with red ochre; but about 300 years B. C. hair-pencils were invented; and, A. D. 600, the coarse glutinous substances, in which they were at first dipped, were improved into the well-known ink formed into cakes.* Both the ink and pencils have been adopted with great advantage in Europe, though only for drawing, while in China they are still the writing implements; there, indeed, the two arts were originally one. To the tenth century Dr Morrison refers the art of printing. It is conducted, however, in a very different manner from ours, being, in fact, merely a species of wood-engraving. The sentence or paragraph is written distinctly upon paper, which is then pasted upon a thin block. The printer, following the direction of the characters, cuts through them into the wood, which is thus so indented, that a sheet laid above it receives the impression. This mode is certainly less convenient than that of move-

* Morrison's Miscellany, pp. 33, 34.

able types, and yet it is not, on the whole, expensive or incommodious. Wood is a very cheap material; the cutting is easily and quickly performed; and, as in stereotyped works, the blocks can be preserved and copies taken off as wanted. The preface commonly mentions the place in which they are deposited, so that, if a demand arises, new impressions may be procured. By this process there can scarcely be any risk of errors of the press, which with us are guarded against with such labour.

Two pages are taken off upon one leaf, which is then doubled, and sewed up on the open part, while the close side composes the outer margin. The blank half of the leaf being thus joined, only the printed part is visible, divided into two pages, which, from the thinness of the paper, appear as if on opposite sides of a single leaf. The binding is not, as with us, glued to the leaves; it is a case of stiff pasteboard wrapt round them, in some parts double, and secured by a fastening of silk and bone. When this is loosened, and the boards unfolded, there appear within from four to six or seven slightly-stitched livraisons, about the size of one of our magazines, and which can be taken out and replaced at pleasure.* This plan, even as compared with ours, is not without its advantages. The reader, instead of a ponderous tome, holds in his hand a light pamphlet; and the binding, moreover, is exempt from the constant friction by which ours is so soon destroyed. The boards are sometimes covered

* Astley's Collection, vol. iv. pp. 162, 163. The author had also the opportunity of inspecting Chinese books in the East India Company's Library.

with silk, and fancifully ornamented with gold and silver flowers.

The literature itself, of which the external form and apparatus have now been described, is very ample. Great works are usually composed by associated members of the Han-lin Board, under the authority, and printed at the expense, of government. These consist chiefly of histories, dictionaries of the language, and compendiums of arts and sciences, or encyclopædias. The authors thus employed are, of course, possessed of suitable materials and abundant leisure, and are not obliged to gratify the impatience, or court the taste of the public. Perhaps, however, the very circumstance of writing under command, and the dread of censure from the emperor and his agents, though it may guard against palpable errors, will paralyse the powers of invention and the flights of genius. The career of publication, however, is open to every individual; works are not even subjected to any previous censorship; but a prompt and severe punishment awaits the authors of those which contain any thing offensive to the government.

The principal sections of their literature are:—1. Philosophy, including whatever is taught of theology and general physics. 2. History. 3. The drama; and, 4. Novels.

In the first and most important of these departments, the Chinese refer always to one work, the Y-king, called also Ye-king, Yih-king, and U-king, as their most ancient and valuable treasure. Language seems to sink under the panegyrics which they lavish upon it, representing it as the fountain and centre of all their knowledge. According to

Kang-hi, who studiously adopted Chinese ideas on these subjects, the Y-king contains all things; Fou-hi, Chin-nong, Hoang-ti, Yao, and Chun, ruled by it. "The occult virtue, and the operations of Heaven and man, are all comprised in the Y-king."* Considering the transcendent veneration in which the natives hold this work, it has been very perplexing to foreigners that they cannot without the utmost difficulty form any idea what it is. The most elaborate treatises respecting it contain only obscure and detached hints; by combining these, however, with the somewhat less imperfect notice of Visdelou,† we hope to convey to our readers some notion of this celebrated production.

Our expectation of finding in the Y-king any portion of that divine and transcendent wisdom which the Chinese so fondly ascribe to it, was greatly lessened, when we discovered that it is entirely founded upon the *koua*, or eight lines, partly entire partly broken, which Fou-hi discovered on the back of a dragon, and Hoang-ti on that of a tortoise. Nay, these lines are considered, *par excellence*, as the Y-king.‡ To understand how they could ever imagine all knowledge to be concentrated in this singular shape, we must recollect that these eight koua, multiplied by a peculiar process to sixty-four hexagrams, were the infant efforts made by the nation in the grand art of expressing thoughts by writing. To each of these sixty-four hexagrams was attached the idea of some one of the great objects of nature; such as, heaven, earth, mountains, and ri-

* Mémoires, tome ix. p. 146-203.
† Annexed to Gaubil, Chou-king.
‡ Ibid. pp. 45, 406.

vers. Much more copious and convenient representations were soon invented; yet the koua, consecrated by antiquity, were never forgotten, but, on the contrary, regarded with increasing veneration. They were imagined to contain all knowledge, and even to possess mystic and supernatural virtue. Nay, they are considered as a sort of representation of the creating power itself, to whom the term Y appears specially appropriated, as we find it said, "The Y possesses the great term; it has produced the couple; from the couple have come the four images; and thence the eight koua, symbols of all existences.* Divination also was performed by means of them; certain lines being chosen by lot on critical occasions, and viewed as affording either lucky or unlucky omens.† It was impossible to discover how qualities thus marvellous could reside in a series of lines, either entire or broken; but this difficulty was imputed to the ignorance of mankind; nor was it ever doubted that there really dwelt in them a mysterious import, which sages of transcendent wisdom might penetrate. It was attempted, accordingly, by the most illustrious philosophers of whom China could boast. The first whose labours raised him to fame was Ouen-ouang, called often Wun-wang, whose revered wisdom was chiefly instrumental in elevating his family to the imperial throne. He produced a commentary, held in profound veneration, and considered ever after as an integral part of the Y-king. Europeans have translated only a few passages, which are certainly very obscure. Under the hexagram expressing heaven, it says, "beginning, progress, perfection, consumma-

* Gaubil, Chou-king, pp. 45, 46.
† Mémoires, tome ix. p. 198.

tion;" words on whose hidden sense M. Rémusat seems to agree with the Chinese in thinking, that a volume might be written, though he does not attempt to explain in what manner. The following are short specimens given by Visdelou of Ouen-ouang's Commentary, which we are far from pretending to consider as intelligible; yet there appears an occasional glimpse of meaning; and they may give some idea of the manner in which, upon a mechanical basis of lines, moral maxims might be raised. What is said above of the connexion between the images and the koua, may afford some conception how the former can enter into the dialogue.

The second of the six hexagrams:—"Shining humility becomes justly fortunate." The image says:—"Shining humility (just and fortunate lot!) gains the depth of the heart."

The third of the nine:—"Humility, which has rendered great services. The honest man has a fortunate end." The image says:—"An honest man who has rendered great services, is approved by all people."*

It is a remarkable circumstance, that even the lofty mind of Confucius, imbued, indeed, with overweening reverence for antiquity, adopted entire the national admiration of the koua. Sensible of the obscurity in which the commentary of Ouen-ouang had left it involved, he devoted himself to its interpretation, which he considered as the main object of his existence. He seems, indeed, to have deeply felt that it was almost impossible to affix to it any meaning; yet we find him breathing an earnest wish, that his life might be spared for

* Gaubil, Chou-king, p. 407-416.

fifty years, when he hoped his maturer talents would enable him to dive into the mysterious import of the Y-king.* He might, we suspect, have spent ages in the attempt to discover the meaning of what never had any. However, he did at last produce a commentary, which was received by the nation with the deepest respect, and was incorporated with the original work, of which it has ever since been considered as an essential part. It was said to form the wings on which the Y-king would fly down to posterity. It is probably the only part of real value; for, though it shares to a great extent the general character of incomprehensibility, it is interspersed with some of his pure and beautiful maxims. The following quotations by Kang-hi are seemingly derived from this commentary:—

"To improve from day to day is a great virtue. He who in study advances a step every day, has not lost his time and his years.

"The path of heaven is simple and clear; but the path of the sage is made only with effort and perseverance."† The same may probably be said of the following, for which we are indebted to Dr Morrison:—"It is the sage alone who knows to advance or to recede; to preserve or to see destroyed, without losing his tranquillity; it is only the sage who can do so."—"A virtuous man in the midst of difficulties will adhere to his virtuous purpose, even to loss of life."‡

From this general survey, we think it evident that the Y-king possesses an ancient and venerated, but fanciful groundwork, on which the greatest sages

* Marshman's Confucius, p. 459.
† Memoires, tome ix. p. 89-102. ‡ Dictionary, p. 395-464.

have in vain attempted to throw any light, but to which they have attached some useful rules of life and manners.

Besides the Y-king, the Chinese reckon three other ancient books or *king*, which rank with it, and are held in almost equal veneration :—These are, 2. The Shoo-king, or Chou-king, a collection of historical documents edited by Confucius, and which will be more fully noticed when treating of that branch of literature. 3. The Shi-king, or Chi-king, a compilation of ancient poems, formed also by Confucius, and which will be considered under the head of poetry. 4. The Li-ki, or Ly-ki, treats of propriety in dress, demeanour, conversation, and the ordinary conduct of life. These, it is said, are illustrated by an eminent author from the biography and sayings of Wun-wang (Ouen-ouang); but Dr Marshman rather thinks that Confucius selected them from various quarters. In the Li-ki are concentrated the ideas and maxims of the ancient Chinese regarding morals and behaviour; and it has probably contributed more towards forming their character, during the last 2000 years, than all the other classics united.* Under the head of national manners, some extracts and notices of this work will be introduced.

We now proceed to notice Confucius and his school, which include most of what is truly valuable in Chinese ethics. Their works cannot, indeed, be properly called philosophy, as they make very little attempt to systematize, and that little is ill executed. But we incline to agree with a learned writer, that their moral precepts and maxims of wisdom are equal to any that have proceeded from an uninspired pen.

* Marshman's Confucius, Pref. p. 14-19.

Confucius.

The life of this distinguished sage, who has stamped his mind and character during so many centuries on such a vast multitude of human beings, cannot be devoid of interest.* It was an eventful one, by no means spent in retired study, but amid various public employments, and chequered with strange vicissitudes. The empire, as formerly observed, was then agitated by the most violent convulsions, and split into a number of petty states, engaged in almost continual war. Confucius did not belong to the central kingdom, the limits of which were then greatly circumscribed, but to a principality called

* We have chiefly followed the narrative of Amiot in the twelfth volume of the Memoires, which is much more copious, and drawn seemingly from more varied sources, than the short one prefixed by Dr Marshman to his edition of the works of Confucius.

Lou, occupying the greater part of the modern province of Shan-tung. He was born of a family of distinction; but, in consequence of his father's death when he was only three years old, his education devolved upon his mother, to whom he always showed the most profound reverence and submission. He soon displayed a gravity very unusual at his time of life. Instead of the ordinary sports of youth, his favourite amusement was to perform before his companions those ceremonies, and show those marks of respect, which the rites of China prescribe for the different ranks of society. Sometimes he would place an object in an elevated position, and pay to it the homage due to ancestors, prostrating himself, and beating the ground with his forehead. But, on being sent to school, he applied most diligently to matters of higher importance. He became the favourite of his master, who was also a magistrate, and was frequently employed by him in teaching the other scholars. At seventeen, the exigencies of his family obliged him to suspend his studies and seek a public employment, for which he was fully qualified both by birth and education. He was appointed superintendent of the sale of grain,—not assuredly a very intellectual function; but he nevertheless attended to it with great assiduity. Instead of committing the duty, as had been usual, to mercenary deputies, he personally examined every transaction, and introduced salutary regulations, which greatly raised his reputation. Being advanced to a more important place, as inspector of fields and flocks, he likewise devoted himself with entire zeal to this occupation, and by relieving the poor labourers, instructing cultivators in new processes, and remov-

ing oppressive imposts, he effected a decided improvement in his district, and established his character as one who deserved to fill the highest offices in the state. About this period, his mother having died, he withdrew for some time from public life, and distinguished himself by the pomp with which he celebrated her obsequies; endeavouring by his example to introduce even a more solemn ceremonial than was then customary.

The reputation of Confucius being now widely spread, he was invited by the King of Yen, one of the tributary princes, to give advice as to the best system of government. He visited that monarch, but declined the invitation to remain, being desirous to reserve his services for his native country. It may be presumed, that amid all these pursuits he continued without intermission to cultivate his mind, and to store it with the history and precepts of antiquity. That nothing might be wanting, he went to a neighbouring kingdom to study under a professor of music,—an art for which he cherished all the enthusiasm felt during the earliest ages of the empire.

Having returned to Lou, he undertook, at the age of thirty, to act the part of a public instructor, —a character, of which, in our part of the world, we have no example. His house was open to all,—young and old, rich and poor,—who wished to obtain useful information, and to receive lessons on their several duties. His disciples, who were mostly men of mature age, announced their submission as pupils by performing the ko-tou before him, beating their foreheads against the ground, in sign of the most profound veneration. A few remained constantly attached to

his person, and accompanied him every where, even to court; but the greater number pursued their ordinary occupations, and merely sought occasional counsel and instruction. When visiting him for this purpose, they remained in the gallery or antechamber till he could either come out or admit them to his presence. He was wont to inquire after the conduct of those who had become his scholars, and if he learned any thing blamable, did not fail to transmit to them advice and admonition.

The office of public teacher, assumed by him, having been filled with distinguished success, his reputation spread wider every day. He received an invitation from the king of the neighbouring state of Tsi, to instruct him in the art of ruling. History and government being his favourite studies, he seems to have felt an earnest ambition to obtain the supreme direction of some country, which, under his auspices, might become flourishing, the seat of ancient and revered usages, and regulated in every respect according to the principles of Yao and Chun. He therefore with alacrity repaired to Tsi; but was much disappointed to find the prince a frivolous youth, who had sent for him through mere curiosity, and could not by any means be induced to adopt the most salutary reforms. While he lingered in the hope of things taking a more favourable turn, he found an opportunity, along with a distinguished disciple, to visit the imperial capital. Here he took up his abode with a philosophical musician, and attracted a considerable number of admirers; yet he does not appear to have obtained any notice, or even to have been heard of, at the court. He felt great satisfaction, however, at seeing an ex-

hibition of the ceremonies observed in honour of ancestors, as well as those of the Tien, performed with a solemnity which he had nowhere else witnessed; and also in viewing the portraits of the successive emperors, though these did not appear to him to be arranged according to their relative merits.

On returning to Tsi, he found matters in as discouraging a state as ever, and resolved to repair again to his native country. Here the public voice was so strongly expressed in his favour, that the prince found it impossible to exclude him altogether from his service; but the ministers, anxious to keep him at a distance from court, offered only a subordinate appointment, which his disciples, filled with indignation, advised him to reject. He considered it his duty, however, to accept it; though, as the power of the king was soon after crushed by a party of rebellious councillors, he felt himself called upon to resign this situation; and he declined high offers made by the new rulers with the view of obtaining the sanction of his great name. Returning into the bosom of private life, he engaged with ardour in literary labours, particularly the interpretation of the Y-king, which he considered, though with little reason, as the most important intellectual task on which he could be engaged. But, while so occupied, he was induced, by the hopes of public employment, to go to the neighbouring court of Tchen; where, however, he could procure nothing beyond empty respect. Some favourable prospects again opened at the capital of Tsi; but the good dispositions of the king were counteracted by artful ministers.

A brilliant era, however, in his life soon arrived. The lawful prince of Lou, having, it would appear,

recovered his authority, felt the value of his learning and talents. He first appointed him governor of the metropolis, and then supreme judge. In the latter capacity Confucius began his career by putting to death a powerful individual guilty of the greatest crimes, but whose high influence had overawed former administrations. This was the commencement of a system of rigid and impartial justice, which gave such universal satisfaction as induced his master to raise him to the rank of prime minister. He applied himself most indefatigably and successfully to his high functions. Some of his measures seem, indeed, to have been marked by an unwise interference with private arrangements. For example, he divided the land into five descriptions, fixed the species of grain to be cultivated on each, and the times of sowing and reaping. However, he protected industry, abolished monopolies, and reduced the exorbitant power of several *tay-fou* or grandees, who had erected castles, and set the monarch at defiance.

But this bright period was of short duration. The king died, and was succeeded by his son, a thoughtless youth, who allowed himself to be swayed by other counsels than those of the sage. This distinguished minister withdrew from his employment,—a circumstance which occasioned so much dissatisfaction, that the young prince was persuaded to invite him again to court. He received him with the utmost respect; but his first questions betrayed the frivolity of his character. He began by asking what kind of dress a philosopher wore? It was answered, that he studied no singularity in this respect but adopted the fashion of his country. "Then,'

said the monarch, " what is his manner of life? How is he distinguished from other men?" Confucius pointed out the course of action followed by such a character, especially when invested with supreme power. At the next interview, however, the prince again began :—" Well, I am very fond of antiquity, I wish you could tell me what sort of bonnet Chun wore." No answer being returned, the youth asked the reason, and was told, in reply, that the merits of Chun rested upon entirely different grounds ; and an elaborate picture was drawn of the many things that this great ruler had done for the establishment of useful laws, and the good of his people. Although these discourses contained much that was not very agreeable to the royal ear, yet, being delivered with eloquence, and in the most respectful manner, they were received with satisfaction, and the wise man was appointed to honourable employments. His favour, however, did not continue long. The minister of a neighbouring state having put his master to death, and usurped the government, Confucius, who carried even to excess his reverence for the rights of royalty, exhorted the king to send an army to reinstate the legitimate family. The sovereign, not seemingly without some reason, hesitated to take such a step ; and the usurper, anxious to conciliate the prince, sent an embassy, accompanied by eighty females, the most beautiful and accomplished that could be found in his dominions. Such a gift was but too acceptable to the youthful monarch; but foreseeing how it would be relished by Confucius, he endeavoured to sound him by asking, whether a sovereign, amid the cares and burdens of royalty, might not indulge in occasional intervals of

relaxation. The answer was a decided negative; and it was added, that all the time not actually devoted to public duties ought to be employed in studies calculated to fit him for their proper discharge. The rigour of this answer, which does seem rather extreme, was used as a pretext for disregarding the sage's opinions altogether, and giving the full range to inclination. The mission was received, and the influence of Confucius was at an end.

The philosopher, thus left without any attraction in his native country, was invited to Ouei, one of the finest of the numerous kingdoms into which China was then divided. On his way he received public testimonies of the general esteem in which he was held, and was entertained at court as if he had been the envoy of some great potentate. The king had frequent and familiar conferences with him; yet a seat in the royal council, though promised, was delayed on various pretexts. Meantime, Nan-tsée, the favourite queen, expressed an anxious wish to have an interview with so celebrated a character, though the nobleman intrusted with the message scarcely hoped for his consent to a step so contrary to Chinese maxims. He was therefore agreeably surprised to receive for answer, that the stranger would gladly embrace any mode of being useful to the monarch. He went, accordingly, entered the hall, and having requested to know his majesty's pleasure, was desired to walk up to the queen's apartments. Confucius replied, that he had come prepared to give advice to the king upon any subject; but his majesty knew well that it was unlawful to enter the chamber of any lady except that of his own wife. As soon as this apology was made known to her, she exclaimed, "Well,

I am resolved to see him ; since he will not come to me, I will go to him ;" and hastened down stairs with a train of attendants. As soon, however, as the philosopher heard their steps, and the tinkling of the jewels, he turned with downcast eyes towards the north, and placed himself in the attitude of performing the most profound homage towards the throne. Nan-tsée, seeing him in this posture, had not the courage to speak to him, but immediately retired. Her influence was then exerted against his interests, in a manner which soon satisfied him that no important employment was to be expected at this court.

The following years were spent by Confucius in travelling among the neighbouring states, with the view of extending his information, and in the hope of being invested with those high public functions which he was so ambitious to discharge. He received repeated overtures of this nature ; but his plans were either counteracted by court-intrigues, or the invitations were found to proceed from some wicked or unworthy ruler, who wished by the sanction of so great a name to lessen the odium under which he himself laboured. During these journeys, he was more than once placed in situations of imminent danger. In one district, being mistaken for Yang-hou, an oppressive tax-gatherer, he and his friends were attacked by an infuriated multitude, and obliged to seek refuge in a solitary building, in which they were nearly starved before the populace could be convinced of their error. This was a mere mistake ; but in another place, violent jealousy was excited by the number of persons who assembled under a large tree to listen to his instructions. The commander-in-chief sent a party of soldiers, who

attacked them sword in hand, and obliged them to flee for their lives. The only administration of which he could approve, was that of a city where Tsée-lou, one of his disciples, had been appointed governor; but intrigues at court caused that officer's removal; and when the latter, in company with the philosopher, some time afterwards, visited the town, they were suspected of an intention to raise an insurrection, and narrowly escaped being put to death.

During this period, Confucius paid another visit to the imperial capital, and stored his mind afresh with interesting ideas and important information; but no mention is made of any notice having been taken of him by government. Though his journeys were frequent, they did not extend over more than one-half of China, being bounded on the south by the Yang-tse-kiang, and on the west by the province of Shen-see; and he never examined any region beyond the empire.

After an absence of fourteen years he returned to his native country. The infirmities of age were now fast stealing upon him, and the death of his wife was regarded by him as a warning of his own approaching fate. He determined finally to renounce those desires of public employment which through life he had so fondly cherished, and to devote himself to the completion of the great literary works which had been hitherto only a secondary object. He formed a pavilion in a grove of apricot-trees, where he lived tranquil and respected, attracting numerous visiters, and being even consulted by the court on subjects professedly important, though, in fact, rather matters of curiosity than connected with the administration of affairs. At length he completed all the

tasks which he had prescribed to himself. Having edited and commented on the *king*, or ancient books, which he wished to make a permanent standard of belief and practice to his countrymen, he determined to celebrate the occasion by peculiar solemnities. After several days spent in fasting and purification, he caused an altar to be erected, turned his face towards the north, and dropping on both knees, returned fervent thanks to Heaven for having preserved his life till he had completed these great undertakings.

A few days after this ceremony Confucius assembled his disciples, and gave them his last exhortation, pointing out to each the pursuit in which his talents would render him most useful. The anticipations of his approaching end now deepened; he even allowed himself to be depressed by superstitious omens; and at this trying period did not display the fortitude which seemed to belong to his character. His mind is described as having been peculiarly depressed by the idea, that in all the surrounding kingdoms, the just and beneficent principles of government, which it had been the object of his life to inculcate, had finally sunk into oblivion. It appeared to the sage, that from China, which was to him the whole world, all that was ancient, wise, and great, was disappearing; that his doctrines and precepts would perish with him; and that he had lived and taught in vain. Little did he foresee, that for so many ages his person would be held in almost divine veneration; and that his works and maxims would, professedly at least, afford the rule, according to which this vast empire was to be regulated.

On a general survey of the character of Confu-

cius, it seems impossible not to acknowledge him to have been possessed of very pure and exalted virtue. He displayed, indeed, great eagerness for employment in public life; yet this was always combined with the aim of rendering signal services to mankind, and was accompanied by an uncompromising adherence to honour and principle. To these he was ready to sacrifice every object of ambition, and actually did so; hence the pursuit became the bane of his peace. As a learned man and a public teacher, he might have lived tranquil and happy, and enjoyed general esteem; but his endeavours after power, coupled with a determination not to make the sacrifices which were necessary for its attainment, led to frequent and deep disappointment. His principles of government were despotic, and he every where inculcates submission as the indispensable duty of subjects. Kang-hi, with the applause natural to a despot, quotes from him the following maxim:—"To make the people act is necessary; but to instruct them in the end or reason of what is commanded is not suitable."* Yet since, by the severity of his counsels, he lost the favour of so many princes, this opinion cannot be suspected as the offspring of servility. China had scarcely ever afforded an example of limited monarchy, far less of a well-ordered republic; and all the movements made by the people had been those of turbulent and desolating insurrection. While he demanded from them profound submission, he exacted from the sovereign an entire self-denial and devotion to the duties of his station, which even the best were found unwilling to give.

* Mémoires, tome ix. p. 239

The general deportment of this great man is said to have been such as created in his disciples at once reverence and love. His demeanour in society was modest and ingenuous, without any airs of superiority. He was, according to the Lung-nee, "gentle, and yet inspired respect; he was grave, but not austere; venerable, yet pleasant."*—"He had," according to the same work, "no selfish idea, no self-will, no obstinacy, no egotism. He led men forward to knowledge in a gradual and gentle, but most effectual manner. He instructed me in the beauty of virtue; he gently allured me to propriety and reason." He studied particularly the mode of addressing with suitable respect persons of various ranks and all ages. The profound humility with which he entered the palace, and did homage to the person of the sovereign,† might have seemed tinctured with servility, had not the firmness and boldness of his advices shown that it proceeded only from principle. He paid considerable attention to dress, studiously suiting it to occasions of mourning, ceremony, and festival; yet avoiding singularity.‡ Though he shunned all excess in eating and drinking, he was more attentive to these objects than might have been expected,—a circumstance which seems to have been connected with the idea of having every thing arranged with propriety. He was careful that the victuals should be of good quality, free from taint, and the fruits ripe; and he would not drink purchased wine, lest it should be adulterated. He was careful, also, that the dishes should be duly placed and carved; and if the table was

* Marshman's Confucius, p. 504.
† Ibid. p. 654-665. ‡ Ibid. p. 670-682.

not rightly arranged, he declined to sit down.* On being seated to a good dinner, an air of approbation, it is said, was visible on his countenance, which the commentators represent as assumed solely in compliment to the master of the house; but the text does not preclude a more obvious interpretation.†

The works of Confucius have appeared before the world under a somewhat equivocal aspect, making it not always easy to determine what really is or is not his. Although he undoubtedly possessed great mental powers, the writings published by himself do not profess to aim at originality, or at expressing the ideas which arose in his own mind. He held himself forth exclusively as the restorer and interpreter of antiquity, within whose limits all that was precious in knowledge or wisdom appeared to be confined.‡ No intellect so strong, perhaps, was ever imbued with such entire submission to authority. With the exception of the Tchun-tsieou, a contemporary history, considered by him an object of secondary importance, he did not communicate to the public any work entirely his own. Those which he bequeathed as the literary labour of his life, were editions of the *king*, or classical books, in which he sought to concentrate all the beauty and excellence of former ages. These were the Y-king, or book of philosophy already mentioned, to which he annexed an ample commentary, considered as part of the work, and which contains almost all that is of any real value. 2. The Shoo-king, or Collection of Historical Documents. 3. The Shi-king, or Collection of Poems. 4. The Li-ki, or Collection of Forms and Observances.—The Hiao-

* Marshman's Confucius, p. 645-86-98.
† Ibid. p. 713. ‡ Ibid. p. 415.

king also, or Precepts of Filial Piety, is generally, though without absolute certainty, ascribed to him.

Although, however, the *king* formed the literary boast of Confucius, and were given by him to the world as containing the most valuable portion of his works, his disciples, after his death, committed to writing the most remarkable maxims and sentiments which he had been accustomed to express or inculcate. These they mixed, and sometimes nearly overlaid, with comments of their own, not always very clearly distinguishable from the words of their master; yet the writings thus produced convey to us the real mind of the Chinese sage, and are to be considered as more properly his than those published by himself. Accordingly, they have been received by his countrymen, not, indeed, with the same unlimited veneration, but still as works bearing the highest character. They consist of, 1. The Choong-yoong, or Immutable Mean; 2. The Ta-hyoh, or Instructions for Rulers; 3. The Lung-nee, or Conversations with his Disciples; which, added to the Hea-mung, by Mencius, compose what the natives reverentially call the Sze-shoo, or "Four Books."* As they have been all translated, and several of them repeatedly, these fountains of Eastern wisdom are in a great measure opened. The versions, however, are only to be found in works which probably have come under the notice of few of our readers, who would perhaps feel little inclined to study them entire; hence a few select specimens, conveying a general idea of the whole, will, we think, prove not uninteresting.

The Choong-yoong is the most elaborate of these

* Marshman's Confucius, Pref. p. 34. Morrison's Miscellany, p. 34.

works, and comprehends an attempt to systematize morality, and found it upon general principles. Like similar efforts, however, in Chinese writers, it is exceedingly crude and defective; and its merit consists altogether in the eloquence and moral beauty of particular passages. The title signifies the "Immutable Mean;" it having been already observed by early sages, that virtue is often placed in the middle between two extremes.* This principle, which involves a great degree of truth, is carried by Confucius too far, when he makes it the foundation of all moral science. Ching, or the middle, is said to be the grand basis of all things; and Ho (harmony) the all-pervading principle of the universe. "Extend Ching and Ho to the utmost, and heaven and earth will be at rest, and all things be produced and nourished according to their nature."† The practical delineation of one, supposed to follow this harmonious mean, under the title of The Superior Man, is better than this theoretical definition.

"The superior man, in dealing with others, does not descend to any thing low or improper. How unbending his valour! He stands in the middle, and leans not to either side. The superior man enters into no situation where he is not himself. If he holds a high situation, he does not treat with contempt those below him; if he *occupies* an inferior station, he uses no mean arts to gain the favour of his superiors. He corrects himself, and blames not others; he feels no dissatisfaction. Above, he mur-

* Mémoires, tome ix. p. 78.

† Collie, Four Books (Malacca Mission Press, 1828), Chun-yung, p. 122.

murs not at Heaven; below, he feels no resentment towards man. Hence the superior man dwells at ease, entirely waiting the will of Heaven."*

The following picture of the character of the man fitted to adorn a high public station, and of the glory due to him, appears to us eloquent:—

"It is only the most holy man under heaven who is possessed of that clear discrimination and profound intelligence which fit him for filling a high station; who possesses that enlarged liberality and mild benignity, which fit him for bearing with others; who manifests that firmness and magnanimity, that enable him to hold fast good principles; who is actuated by that benevolence, justice, propriety, and knowledge, which command reverence; and who is so deeply versed in polite learning and good principles, as to qualify him rightly to discriminate. Vast and extensive are the effects of his virtue; it is like the deep and living stream, which flows unceasingly; it is substantial and extensive as heaven, and profound as the great abyss. Wherever ships sail or chariots run; wherever human strength extends; wherever the heavens overshadow and the earth sustains; wherever the sun and moon shine, or frost and dews fall, among all who have blood and breath, there is not one who does not honour and love him."†

He adds elsewhere, in a strain of similar enthusiasm, "How great is the way of the sage! It is vast and flowing as the ocean; it issues forth and nourishes all things; it is exalted even to heaven." But he falls into a truly Chinese mode of panegyric when he adds, as the crown of these attributes, "It

* Collie, Chun-yung, p. 6-10. † Ibid. p. 28.

contains three hundred outlines of ceremonies, and three thousand minute particulars thereof."*

In the course of the work, the philosopher enters into a lofty panegyric on sincerity, which is treated, not only as an exalted virtue, but even as supplanting in some degree the immutable mean, considered as the basis of all excellence. "Sincerity," says he, "is the origin and consummation of things. Without sincerity there would be nothing. It is benevolence by which a man's self is perfected, and knowledge by which he perfects others." A strange supernatural power is even ascribed to it: "The Taou, or reason of the supremely sincere, enables them to foreknow things."†

The Ta-hyoh contains rules for the good government of a state. Considering the pre-eminent importance and constant attention given by Confucius to the subject, the extreme brevity of this production appears somewhat surprising. The part ascribed to himself consists only of a few sentences, of which the following comprises nearly one-half:—

"The ancients, who wished to restore reason to its due lustre throughout the empire, first regulated the province which they each governed; desirous of governing well their own kingdoms, they previously established order and virtue in their own houses; for the sake of establishing domestic order, they began with self-renovation; to renovate their own minds, they first gave a right direction to their affections; wishing to direct their passions aright, they previously corrected their ideas and desires; and, to rectify these, they enlarged their knowledge to the utmost. Now this enlargement of knowledge

* Collie, p. 24. † Ibid. p. 22.

consists in a most thorough and minute acquaintance with the nature of things around us. A thorough acquaintance with the nature of things renders knowledge deep and consummate; from hence proceed just ideas and desires; erroneous ideas once corrected, the affections of the soul move in a right direction; the passions thus rectified, the mind naturally obeys reason; and the empire of reason restored in the soul, domestic order follows of course; from hence flows order throughout the whole province; and one province rightly governed may serve as a model for the whole empire."*

These few apophthegms, however, are swelled into a little book by ten sections of comment, by Tsung-tse, one of his disciples. They are founded chiefly on the characters of early ministers and emperors, with extracts from their sayings. The account of Ouen-ouang, though somewhat commonplace, appears worth extracting:—

"As a ruler, tender affection to his people was his point of rest; as a minister, reverence for his sovereign; as a son, the height of filial veneration; as a father, the tenderest affection; in his intercourse with men, inviolable sincerity."†

We were much pleased also with the following train of reflection:—

The Chin sovereign once said, "Had I but one minister sincere and upright! Though he possessed no other ability, yet did he possess a heart enlarged and generous; would he, when talents appear in another, regard them with the same satisfaction as though possessed by himself; if another manifest

* Ta-hyoh, end of Marshman's Clavis Sinica, pp. 4, 5.
† Ibid. pp. 8, 9.

wisdom and ability, would he, not merely expressing a favourable opinion with the lips, cordially esteem him and employ him in affairs; such a minister might preserve my posterity and my people for ages to come. But an able minister, who, seeing a man of wisdom and integrity, would dislike him through envy; would prevent a man of known ability and integrity rising into notice, nor employ him in any business of importance; such a minister, however able, would be incapable of protecting my children and my people."

The *Lung-nee*, forming the third book, consists chiefly of detached remarks that dropped from Confucius in the course of conversation, and which his disciples deemed worthy of being preserved. These have no pretension to systematic arrangement, in which, indeed, the Chinese never excelled; nor does the sage appear, like Socrates, to have delighted in any regular train of argument or dialogue. The Lung-nee presents merely aphorisms or sentences, some of which are commonplace, and others tinctured with national feelings and prejudices; but many of them seem entitled to rank with the best effusions of this description which the human mind has ever produced. Some idea of their import may be formed from the following specimens, selected from Dr Marshman's translation:—

"Grieve not that men know not you, but be grieved that you are ignorant of men.

"Governing with equity resembles the north star, which is fixed, and all the stars surround it.

"Have no friends unlike yourself.

"Of the exercise of reason benignity is a rich fruit; this formed the glory of the first emperor.

" Learning without reflection will profit nothing; reflection without learning will leave the mind uneasy and miserable.

" Knowledge produces pleasure clear as water; complete virtue, happiness solid as a mountain; knowledge pervades all things; virtue is tranquil and happy, knowledge is delight, virtue is long life.

" Without virtue, both riches and honour seem to me like the passing cloud.

" The sage's conduct is affection and benevolence ever in operation.

" To be decided and firm in mind, and act with gentleness in governing the people, will not this answer the purpose?

" The man who possesses complete virtue wishes to fix his own mind therein, and also to fix the minds of others; he wishes to be wise himself, and would fain render others equally wise.

" Those who, searching for virtue, refuse to stay among the virtuous, how can they obtain knowledge?

" Only the man who possesses a principle of virtue is able rightly to esteem or reject men.

" The rich and honourable are those with whom men desire to associate; not, however, obtaining their company in the paths of virtue, do not remain in it.

" The poor and low are those whom men avoid; yet if it cannot be done in the way of uprightness, by no means avoid them.

" In your appearance, to fall below decency would be to resemble a savage rustic; to exceed decency would be to resemble a fop; let your appearance be decent and moderate, then you will resemble the honourable man.

"When I first began with men, I heard words, and gave credit for conduct; now I hear words, and observe conduct.

"If any man at the age of forty or fifty shall have made no proficiency in knowledge, he will never be able to render himself venerable."

Although a tone of gentleness generally pervades his maxims, yet his observation of mankind occasionally draws forth remarks tinctured with severity. He describes a person "void of virtue, and pretending to possess it; empty of good, and pretending to be full; low in virtuous attainments, and pretending to have made great advances therein.

"I have found no man who esteems virtue as men esteem pleasure.

"A man who has for three years continued to study, when unable to attain a lucrative situation, I cannot easily find."

The following maxim seems rather too much allied to that apathy which, on such occasions, the Chinese are accused of indulging:—

"If a man bring intelligence to one possessing complete virtue, saying, A man has fallen into a well, would he descend into it to save him? Why should he do this? The honourable man might send a proper person; he would not plunge needlessly into danger. He might put himself to some inconvenience; but would not madly endanger his own life."

The following, which Navarette has gleaned from different sources, seem not unworthy of insertion:—

"Things past are a mirror to what is present and to come.

" Patience is the most necessary thing to have in this world.

" A true and faithful word is harsh to the ear, but good to the heart.

" Sin in a virtuous man is like an eclipse of the sun and moon; all men gaze at, and it passes away; the virtuous man mends, and the world stands in admiration of his fall.

" The perfect man loves all men; he is not governed by private affection or interest, but only regards the public good or right reason. The wicked man, on the contrary, loves if you give, and likes if you commend him.

" A virtuous man fears three things. He fears Heaven, he fears the judges, and he fears the words of holy men.

" The perfect man is never satisfied with himself. He that is satisfied with himself is not perfect.

" He that is sedulous and desirous to improve in his studies, is not ashamed to stoop to ask of others."

The dark anticipations with regard to the reception of his doctrines, amid which the career of Confucius so gloomily closed, soon proved to be quite unfounded. After his death, his reputation spread rapidly, and his praises were sounded by a numerous band of disciples, who formed the chief literary ornament of the succeeding age. The fame of all the others was surpassed, and that of his master rivalled, by Meng-tse, whom Europeans call Mencius, and who appeared about seventy years after the demise of the great philosopher. No particulars of his life have been collected by the Romish missionaries; and the only short notice on the subject, of which we are aware, is that annexed by Mr Collie

to his translation of the Four Books. He was born of somewhat humble parents, and, like Confucius, spent his early years entirely under the guidance of his mother. This lady was considerably annoyed by the blind propensity to imitation which her son displayed. His residence happening to be near a butcher's shop, he soon made it his delight to represent the rude operations connected with his neighbour's trade. To remove him from this influence, another house was chosen; but this being in the vicinity of a churchyard, the youth employed his talents for mimicry in imitating the cries and lamentations which he heard from the mourners. A more appropriate dwelling was then found, immediately opposite to a school; when Mencius applied with characteristic ardour to the laudable exercises carried on in that seminary. He soon acquired a high reputation for learning, and ranked himself among the disciples of Confucius. He shared that sage's veneration for antiquity, seeking to exhibit the conduct of Yao and Chun as a model to all succeeding sovereigns; yet he did not at first aspire to public life, but preferred solitude, till he was invited to court by the Prince of Shan-tung. Twice he refused; but on receiving the third message, he began to consider, whether it was not his duty to attempt forming the character of this ruler after the antique models which he venerated. He spent some time in the service of this and several other potentates; but finding, like his master, that his lofty and uncompromising maxims, not being suited to the atmosphere of courts, precluded the hope of his attaining any influence over their councils, he cheerfully withdrew into private life, and devoted

to literature the remainder of his days. His principal work, divided into the Hea-mung and the Shang-mung, ranks, as already observed, with those which record the opinions of Confucius, and forms the last of the "Four Books" held by the Chinese in peculiar veneration. It contains, among other things, his conversations with the princes in whose service he was engaged, to whom his views, both on politics and morals, are fully developed. This work till very recently was known in Europe only by name; but the translation made by Mr Collie of part of the Four Books, and one published by the Asiatic Society of Paris, will now afford the means of conveying to our readers an idea of its contents.

It is impossible to peruse this treatise without being struck with the bold and almost republican tone by which it is pervaded. Mencius, though without professing it, departs in this respect very widely from the example set by his master. He does not, indeed, appear to have actually formed the idea of a commonwealth, or even of a representative system; but the will of the people is always referred to as the supreme power in the state. Princes are warned, that they must not only benefit their subjects, but please them; that otherwise they will soon cease to reign. We find him instructing a prince "to give and take what is pleasing to them, and not to do that which they hate." The doctrine stated is, that he who obtains the people will obtain the empire; and elsewhere, "If the empire is not subdued in heart, there will be no such thing as governing it."—"Three families," says he, "gained the empire by benevolence, and lost it by want of benevolence. If the emperor is not benevolent, he

cannot protect the four seas." He elsewhere urges, "If your majesty exhibits a benevolent government, all the learned under heaven will covet to stand in your court. The husbandmen will all wish to till your lands. Both travelling and stationary merchants will desire to store your majesty's markets." The following also may be quoted with praise:—"Good laws are not equal to gaining the people by good instruction. Good laws the people fear; good instruction the people love." Being consulted by a sovereign, whether he ought to attempt the conquest of a neighbouring territory, the answer is, "If the people of Yen are delighted, then take it; but if otherwise, not." In regard to a minister, he justly remarks,—"If the prince be not inclined to right principles or benevolence, to assist him, and prompt him by violence and war, is to support evil." But, in certain circumstances, he seems to invest the premier with exorbitant power, saying, "When the prince is guilty of great errors, he should reprove him. If, after doing so again and again, he does not listen, he ought to dethrone him, and put another in his place." Very severe strictures are passed on the conduct of the public men of the age. "Those," he remarks, "who at present are called good ministers, in ancient times would have been called the robbers of the people." Even in regard to the efforts made to reach power by the display of intellectual eminence, he observes,—"The men of the present day cultivate divine nobility, in order that they may obtain human nobility; and when they have obtained human nobility, they throw away divine nobility." The flattering and artificial smiles of a court are not ill ridi-

culed when he says, "They who shrug up their shoulders, and force a flattering laugh, labour harder than the man who in summer tills the fields."

Considering the lofty and often very severe tone which prevails in the discourses of this moralist, it is with surprise we find his speculative opinions of human nature singularly favourable and indulgent. In opposition even to Taou Tsye, a rival sage, who maintained that the human will was like a twig, easily bent in either direction, he maintained that "men are all naturally virtuous, as all water flows downwards. All men have compassionate hearts; all men have hearts that feel ashamed of vice." He seems to consider that it is artificially, as it were, that men are made to practise evil; as a stream of water, if dammed up, may be made to rise even to the hills. Yet he dwells much on the benefit of adversity and suffering, in forming an energetic and virtuous character. He says, "A man's having the wisdom of virtue, and the knowledge of managing affairs, depends on his having endured much." And elsewhere,—"Chun was elevated from tilling the ground; Foo-yue from being a house-builder; Kaou-kih from selling fish. When Heaven was about to place these men in important trusts, it first generally tried their minds, exercised their limbs, inured them to abstinence, exposed them to poverty and adversity; thus it moved their hearts and taught them patience." Although he shared but imperfectly the reverence felt by Confucius for princes, he appears to have carried still farther the Chinese virtue of profound veneration for parents. "Teach," says he, "filial piety and paternal affection, and all will be well." This duty seems, indeed, to be car-

ried to an extreme, when he says, "Parents cannot be more highly honoured than by taking the whole empire, and feeding them with it."

Of the detached maxims of this sage, the following seem not unworthy of his character:—

"I love life, and I love justice; but if I cannot preserve both, I would give up life and hold fast justice. Although I love life, there is that which I love more than life. Although I hate death, there is that which I hate more than death.

"The human figure and colour possess a divine nature; but it is only the sage who can fulfil what his figure promises.

"To feed one, and not to love him, is to treat him like a pig.

"Shame is of great moment to man; it is only the designing and artful that find no use for shame.

"The nature of the superior man is such, that, although in a high and prosperous situation, it adds nothing to his virtue; and although in low and distressed circumstances, it impairs it in nothing."

The Confucian philosophy, founded on devoted reverence for antiquity, was now established in almost exclusive credit; yet it appears that there was still a party, called the Keang-yuen, by whom both it and its followers were held in derision; who said,—"How big and pompous are their words, but do they regard what they have said when they come to act? They are continually calling out, The ancients! the ancients! let those who are born in this age act as men of this age." Although these adversaries probably had a considerable influence, we do not, however, except in this short allusion of Mencius, find any notice of their tenets.

But another sect must now be noticed, which flourished somewhat prior to that of Confucius, and, for some time after his death, rivalled it in celebrity. Its head was Lao-tse, or Lao-kiun, concerning whose school we have not been able to collect more than some detached particulars. The superstitious order of the Tao-tse hailed him as their leader, and in several works he is even mentioned as their founder. Authentic records, however, as will be afterwards pointed out, exhibit them as of much earlier origin, and it seems difficult to discover any connexion between them and this modern chief, except that of common hostility to the ruling school, by whom both were alike persecuted. Among the philosophic adherents of Lao-tse, we find none of the tenets by which their priestly allies were distinguished; such as the evocation of spectral and supernatural appearances, the performance of miracles, and the preparation of the beverage of immortality. Felicity, according to them, consisted in a retired and sequestered life, a voluptuous ease of mind, and an entire absence of thought and care.* Disgusted seemingly with the parade of learning, the blind reverence for antiquity, the pomp and state of public life, the minute formalities and ceremonies of daily intercourse which so strikingly characterize the established system, they broke loose from all these restraints, and studied in every particular to rush into the opposite extreme. They paid no outward respect to any human being; but, withdrawing themselves from all business and care, they denounced study and knowledge as sources of useless anxiety. As the work of Lao-tse, called the Tao-

* Mémoires, tome v. pp. 56, 57.

te-king, has not been translated, nor even analyzed, the following aphorisms are all we have been able to collect from it, some of which are imbued with the careless indolence of the sect; others seem not unworthy of a genuine sage:—

"The more knowledge, the more trouble. He who knows how to content himself with what he has, is always rich.*

"Much wealth is not preserved with justice and integrity. Much reading causes what is studied to be forgotten.

"A wise and learned man does not contend; a beginner does. Where contention is, the best course is to leave every man to his opinion, and not endeavour to carry a man's own, and by this means there will be no offence.

"He that sees himself raised very high, will do well to look to himself, and not forget he may be cast down.

"He that follows his own opinion is in danger of going astray. He that relies upon himself has not a perfect knowledge of affairs. He that is conceited has no merit.

"Holy men heap up virtues, not riches. To adhere to virtue preserves the heart; to adhere to profit destroys it."†

Confucius, in his early career, when visiting the imperial capital, proceeded to the mountain-retirement of Lao-tse, who was then an old man, and in the full height of his philosophical reputation. He received very bluntly his youthful visiter, intimating that he had heard, but by no means approved,

* Mémoires, tome ix. pp. 94, 343.
† Churchill's Collection, vol. i. p. 146-155.

of his course of life and mode of instruction. He reproached him with blind reverence for antiquity, with pride and ostentation in attracting disciples as well as in courting public employment, and warned him, that he must purge his heart of all emotion and love of pleasure, if he wished to be truly wise and happy. The disciples of Confucius had looked forward with extreme curiosity to this interview, and felt desirous to know their master's feelings on its result; but they could draw from him only these few words:—"I know him as little as I know the dragon;"—a response, of which, notwithstanding the most anxious deliberation, they never were able fully to comprehend the import.*

With regard to the speculative opinions of this sect, the only point mentioned, and which is said to have been ever in their mouth, is, that void (*vacuum*) is the origin and end of all things. Their doctrine in this respect, as well as in its practical bearings, seems, as has been observed, to bear a close affinity to that of Epicurus;† whence it must appear the more singular, that any alliance should have existed between a system of speculative atheism and such a wild superstition.

Notwithstanding the consideration which Lao-tse attracted during his life, his opinions afterwards could not sustain a competition with those of Confucius, which soon acquired a decided preference throughout China. The former, however, were still cultivated by Tchuang-tse and other distinguished disciples. This sect, like that of the Greek philosopher named above, originally recommended pure

* Memoires, tome xii. pp. 69, 70.
† Ibid. tome v. pp. 56, 57.

and simple habits as the means of obtaining ease and felicity; though, in the absence of active pursuits and on the principle of centring all enjoyment in the present moment, sensual indulgence was soon viewed as the chief good. There seems to have been a combination of the Cynic and Epicurean in the party who assumed the title of the "Seven Sages of the Forest of Bamboo." Hi-kang, its leader, when visited in his woodland-retreat by Sse-ma-tchao, a renowned warrior and one of his friends, was found seated on a cushion, discoursing on *vacuum* with the utmost volubility. On seeing them enter, he abruptly asked what they wanted; and though they said they had come to visit him, attracted by his high reputation, he took no farther notice of them, and allowed them to depart without the slightest civility. The Chinese chief, less magnanimous than the Macedonian, ordered the discourteous sage to be put to death. Lieou-ling also made himself remarkable by his zeal in inculcating the doctrine of vacuum, by his voluptuous indulgences, and the thoughtless ease to which he resigned himself. As he delighted to drive about almost constantly in a car, drawn by two stags, he said to his disciples, "When the accident happens to me which people call dying, do not be at the trouble of bringing me home, but merely throw me into the ground by the roadside."*

This sect, both in its philosophical and superstitious character, acquired a disastrous influence under the bloody and tyrannic sway of Chi-hoang-ti. Li-tsé, one of their number, was the chief adviser of that despot, and mainly prompted his relentless persecu-

* Grosier, Histoire, tome iv. pp. 130, 131.

tion of all that was ancient and learned in the empire.* As soon, however, as a more enlightened system began to revive, the votaries of Lao-tse lost their influence, and a reproach was thrown on their name in consequence of the violent measures which they had instigated. At present they appear scarcely to exist as a separate order, but merely, in the manner to be hereafter described, attract some votaries as the priests of a peculiar worship.

During the twelfth century, the latter period of the Song dynasty, flourished another school, at the head of which was Tchu-hi, who earned a greater name than any instructor after Confucius and Mencius. From his earliest years he discovered a devoted attachment to study, and made a long journey on foot, with the view of acquiring knowledge under a favourite teacher. His fame for learning being widely spread, he was invited to the palace, where letters and philosophy were then in the greatest esteem. He is said, at first, to have refused the invitation, and not to have accepted it until after repeated entreaty.† In fact, he had adopted peculiarities wisely shunned by Confucius and his followers, and which were little suited to the meridian of a court. His diet was that of a hermit, consisting entirely of dried rice, tea, and herbs; and when visited by the greatest mandarins, he presented them with no other entertainment. He arrayed himself in coarse robes, with sleeves hanging down to the ground. Yet he was nominated to office; and on occasion of a severe dearth, drew up plans for relieving the public calamity,

* Mémoires, tome iii. p. 268-280.
† Grosier, Histoire, tome viii. pp. 600, 601.

which were highly approved, and carried into execution under his direction.* On the accession of Nin-tsong, Tchao-ju-yu, the minister, recommended Tchu-hi as the ablest man in the empire, and who best comprehended the import of the *king* or sacred books. He and several of his followers were accordingly appointed to high situations. Court-intrigues, however, were speedily at work against one who little understood the art of defeating them. The monarch was told by his young favourites that this sage was indeed well fitted for illustrating the old philosophical books, but too vulgar and rustic a personage to hold a place within the precincts of a court. The emperor was thus induced to give Tchu-hi an honourable dismissal.† Memorials were forthwith presented from various quarters, bestowing the highest panegyrics on the fallen minister, and representing the injury which the state must sustain by his removal. A violent ferment arose, and the empire itself seemed shaken by this literary controversy, when a reference was made to the Li-pou Board to decide upon the merits and opinions of Tchu-hi. This body was probably selected by his enemies, from a knowledge of that hostility to innovation, by which they were constantly actuated. After due deliberation, they reported that the compositions of this writer formed no proper interpretation of the works of Confucius, under the pretext of illustrating which he had introduced doctrines entirely different; and that the ancient works themselves, without any commentary, should be declared the standard of Chinese wisdom and policy. A decree to this effect was accordingly issued; the result of which was,

* Grosier, Histoire, p. 606. † Ibid. p. 634-636.

that Tchu-hi and all his adherents were thrust out of every public employment, and many of them driven into exile.* The sage, after this proscription, experienced an entire eclipse of that respect which had hitherto attended him. His disciples gradually forsook him, and many who were loudest in professions of attachment studiously passed his door, to show that they had renounced all connexion with him. Under this reverse, he is said to have displayed a tranquil equanimity, devoting himself to study and to the instruction of his remaining pupils. Feeling his end approach, he put on the habit which belonged to him as a learned man, and expired amid a numerous crowd attracted by curiosity to witness his last moments.†

The works of Tchu-hi are extremely voluminous, exceeding in this respect those of his most distinguished predecessors. Unfortunately none of the Chinese missionaries or scholars, so far as we know, have translated even a fragment of them, so that we can convey to our readers only a very imperfect idea of their tenor. He professed a devoted adherence to ancient learning, commented on the Y-king, and when a doubtful question arose, he agreed to decide it by divination upon the koua. His followers maintained that he had brought out the meaning of these works with a lustre which they had never before displayed.‡ According to others, as we have seen, while professing only to comment upon them, he introduced views of his own entirely different; and though this charge was made by his enemies with the view of ruining his credit, yet, from the origi-

* Grosier, Histoire, tome viii. pp. 638, 639.
† Ibid. pp. 644, 645. ‡ Ibid. p. 619-641.

nality of his character, it was probably not without foundation. Indeed, an able missionary, while extolling his erudition as well as the clearness and elevation of his style, remarks also the boldness with which he criticised and condemned the ancients; considering him as a writer similar to Bayle, and who, like him, opened the way to sceptical and even libertine opinions.* After his death had silenced envy and rivalry, he was ranked among the most illustrious worthies; and under the latter rule of the Song, as also that of the Ming, which followed the Mongol conquest, his authority was held almost equal to that of Confucius. The reigning Tartar dynasty, however, seems rather to take pride in recurring to the purer fountains of ancient Chinese wisdom.

Before quitting the department of philosophy, it may be expected that we should take some notice of their physical science, to which they attach great, though, as we apprehend, very unmerited importance. It consists chiefly in an attempt to explain the formation of the universe, and is thus, like other early systems of physics, connected in some degree with natural theology. It refers chiefly to Tai-ki (Tae-keih, Morrison), as a power or principle whence all things spring, yet inferior to the Tien (Heaven), and destitute of intelligence. From Tai-ki was derived the couple, or Dual Power, called also Yang and Yin, and sometimes male and female; the one ethereal and active, the other heavy and inert. Yang, kept aloft by its own buoyancy, composes the sun and the more ethereal portion of the heavens. A few of the lighter particles of the Yin remaining

* Mémoires, tome viii. pp. 167, 231.

above, have composed the moon and stars; but the greater portion, sinking downwards, formed the solid body of our earth. Yet even here, breath, flame, and some few of the most ethereal elements, belong to the nature of Yang. Another process of production is that already mentioned, when the Yang and Yin, or the couple, produce the four *seang* or images, and these the eight *koua*, "emblems of all existences." From this source it seems to be supposed that *form* chiefly derived its origin.*

We have endeavoured to explain this system in the most appropriate language, in case any reader should think he can attach to it a meaning, of which we confess ourselves incapable. It is always referred to the mystic source of the Y-king; yet it seems not to have been fully matured till the time of Tchu-hi,† to whom it does very little honour; especially as, in his hands and those of his disciples, it became connected with a scheme of materialism. He does not appear to have introduced any sound principle of investigation, to which the Chinese have always remained utter strangers. They seem, indeed, to be entirely destitute of curiosity with regard to the proper grounds of physical science and its most striking results. For example, when shown a burning-glass, which Lord Macartney was conveying to court, they could not perceive any thing wonderful in its structure, but carelessly lighted their pipes at it; and their disdainful looks seemed to say, "Is that piece of glass a fit present for our great emperor?"‡

That branch of knowledge, which we term natural

* Morrison's Miscellany, p. 39, &c. Du Halde, vol. iii. p. 260-262. Gaubil, Chou-king, p. 45.

† Gaubil, Chou-king, Pref. p. 51.

‡ Barrow, p. 342.

history,—the classified description of material objects,—has been cultivated in a more rational manner, and with somewhat greater success. The first work on this subject, entitled Pen-thsaou, is ascribed to an early emperor, Chin-nong, honoured with the title of "divine labourer." New and enlarged editions successively appeared; and in 1578, after the labour of twenty-six years, Le-she-chin completed the Pen-thsaou-kang-mou, in fifty-two livraisons, forming about ten of our ordinary quartos. This has ever since been considered the standard work, and is supposed to carry the science to as great a height as it had attained in Europe previous to the age of Linnæus. The classification is completely natural, without any attempt at artificial arrangement. The vegetable kingdom is divided into herbs, trees, seeds, grain, leguminous plants, and such like. Animals are classed as they resemble the dog, the panther, the tiger, the ras, and others. Minerals are divided into gems, metals, stones, earths, and salts. The general distribution of plants is into three kingdoms, sixteen classes, sixty orders, 1871 natural species, and 8160 medicinal compositions. Very strange ideas, however, are cherished respecting certain alterations imagined to take place in natural objects, by which herbs, trees, and metals, are transmuted into each other. The illusion seems to have been suggested by the observation of insect-transformations, and of the changes effected on metallic substances by fusion. Lead is called the grandfather of the five metals; the influence of the moon for 200 years is said to change arsenic into tin, which, again, on being subjected to the action of the sun, is converted into silver; ice becomes rock-crystal; the field-rat, at a certain period, turns

into a quail, and afterwards resumes its original form. Le-she-chin even asserts, that he has seen fishes converted into moles and rats, and lays down general laws by which he imagines these metamorphoses to be effected.*

Medicine is so interesting as a science, and, as an art, so extremely useful, that we might have expected a practical people like the Chinese to have distinguished themselves by making great progress in it. They have, indeed, written voluminous works on this branch of knowledge; and an imperial college has been established at Pe-king, expressly for its cultivation.† Nay, they made early and important discoveries, with which, till lately, Europeans were unacquainted. Yet these have been so mixed with fantastic theories and superstitious observances, that they have never been able to found upon them a system, either of sound science or successful practice.

The circulation of the blood, unknown to the most learned of the ancients, and considered in Europe as perhaps the most splendid of modern discoveries, has for 2000 years been familiar to Chinese physicians. The glory, however, which they may thereby justly claim, has been greatly obscured by such irrational applications, as to have made it doubtful whether they would not have been better without possessing this knowledge. They profess, by merely feeling the pulses in different parts of the body, without putting any questions to the patient, or learning any thing of his constitution or state of body, to ascertain the seat of the disease, its symptoms, the mode of cure, and the period of recovery.

* Asiatic Journal (2d Ser.), vol. ix. p. 89-229, &c.
† Memoires, tome viii. p. 260; tome iv. p. 396.

They profess to tell, by the same means, whether or not a female will have children, if she be pregnant, and whether of one, two, or three; and if they will be sons or daughters. Each organ, according to them, has a pulse appropriated to it; and D'Entrecolles, with others of their advocates, maintain, that this may really be a branch of knowledge neglected by Europeans. But when we find that the pulse of the heart is in the wrist of the left hand, and that of the liver at its joint; that the pulse of the stomach is at the wrist of the right hand, and that of the lungs at its joint,* it is difficult to imagine that such conclusions can have been founded on any grounds either of reason or observation.

Another discovery which has thrown lustre on Chinese medicine, is that of inoculation. For 3000 years the empire had been ravaged by small-pox; and it was not till the close of the tenth century that this important mitigation was first employed, in the cure of a young prince. The practice rapidly spread, and for some time it was imagined that this cruel malady would be extirpated, till experience proved that it was only rendered more mild.† The process, however, being perfectly simple, continued to be of practical utility. From China it probably spread through the rest of Asia, and thence into the nations of the West.

The total ignorance of anatomy must doubtless be a great check to the progress of medical science. The bodies of deceased relations being held, if possible, more sacred than their living persons, the practice of dissection would be a complete violation

* Du Halde, vol. iii. pp. 362, 363, 376, 419, 420-422.
† Mémoires, vol. iv. p. 392.

of every national feeling. A certain governor, indeed, is said to have caused the bodies of forty criminals to be opened, and drawings to be made of their interior structure, under the direction of skilful physicians. Kang-hi likewise employed Father Parennin to translate into the Mantchoo language a complete system of anatomy as well as medicine;* but this solitary effort to promote the science did not produce any permanent result. Mr Abel saw at Canton a respectable practitioner, who, though he showed an eager interest in the subject, displayed at the same time the most profound ignorance. He knew there were such parts as the heart, the liver, and the stomach; but, by some strange perversity, he imagined them all on the wrong side.† Hence, even with regard to the circulation of the blood, although they are aware of its movements through the arteries and veins, they understand nothing of the process by which it is thrown into the lungs and returned back.‡ They are misled, besides, by a theory of the equilibrium of fluids invented under the dynasty of Song; and also by the application to science of the mystical cosmogony of the Yang and the Yin. Above all, medicine is completely under the dominion of astrology, superstition, and idolatry; and the cure is supposed to depend rather upon the choice of fortunate days, moments, and circumstances, than upon any natural remedy.§ These causes have so far perverted the good sense, which is otherwise characteristic of this people, that

* Parennin sur les Sciences des Chinois, Lettres Edifiantes, tome xxi.

† Abel's Journey, p. 217.

‡ Lettres Edifiantes, tome xxi. p. 137.

§ Memoires, tome iv. p. 394-396.

there is no nation among whom this important art is in a more inefficient state. We have seen the miserable practice even of the emperor's physician when attending the colao; and we shall afterwards observe the eager demand for the prescriptions of Mr Gutzlaff, the missionary, who merely added to his spiritual pursuits a limited knowledge of the medical art.

History forms another extensive and elaborate branch of Chinese composition. It is conducted under the peculiar auspices of government, which in philosophy cherishes only works of high antiquity; but, as history is a subject on which new matter must continually accumulate, provision is made for its regular continuation. The task, as already mentioned, is intrusted to a leading department of the Han-lin or Literary Board; and the records, written on loose sheets, are deposited in an imperial bureau, where they remain a certain period dormant. From time to time, and usually on the accession of a new race, his majesty orders them to be taken out and employed in composing the annals, either of a particular dynasty, or of the empire in general. Of these works we are able to form some estimate, since, independently of several others, the great General History, which enjoys a high reputation, has been translated into French by Mailla. The materials may be regarded as perfectly authentic; the writers are usually men of ability, possessed of ample leisure and resources. Yet a chronicle written in this mechanical manner, as an official act, is not likely to call forth much display of thought or exertion of genius. These works, accordingly, cannot enter into any competition with the historical compositions

produced in the West. Nothing is displayed of the glowing descriptions of Livy, or the deep reflection of Tacitus. The events are not woven into a regular and connected series; their causes are not investigated; characters are not nicely discriminated; and but few general reflections are interspersed. The best of these works can aspire to little above the character of *chronicle*. Incidents are recorded in the order of date; nothing is exhibited in any connected view; and the most important revolutions are mixed up with private occurrences, casualties, eclipses, or remarkable storms and inundations. The narrative is occasionally animated, and contains judicious strictures on the conduct of the principal actors; but, in general, the only parts where much ability is displayed, are the memorials and addresses to the emperors by distinguished ministers and statesmen; yet, as these consist probably of the original documents preserved in the manner above described, the historian can have little merit beyond that of selection.

Besides this great work, however, there is another which the Chinese regard with much deeper veneration, and invest almost with a sacred character. This is the Shoo-king, already repeatedly mentioned as one of the principal works edited by Confucius, and on the recovered fragments of which the early records of the empire are chiefly founded. Unfortunately for those who would claim for it the high rank assigned by the natives, Father Gaubil has favoured the learned world with a complete translation, from which it appears, that this work can scarcely be considered as a history at all. It is a mere collection of documents, explaining the

principles upon which the early sovereigns conducted the affairs of the state; long dialogues between them, their ministers and generals; with proclamations and addresses to their people. We incline to think, from internal evidence, that Confucius acted merely as editor, and did not even in any degree alter these ancient materials. They bear a considerably ruder character than any thing which appears to have emanated from his own mind. The following enumeration of the objects of sovereign power seems marked by peculiar simplicity:—"Virtue is the basis of good government; and this consists, first, in procuring to the people the things necessary for preservation; that is, water, fire, metals, wood, and grain. The ruler must think also of rendering them virtuous, and preserving them from whatever can injure health and life. These points ought to be the subject of songs; these songs serve to animate; and it is thus that the people are preserved."* Another mode of conveying this instruction is contained in the following direction to a mandarin:—"If a man says blamable words, beat him, and keep a register of it; but if he promises to amend, set his words to music, and let them be sung to him every day."†

The following principles of administration, held by one of the ancient emperors, considering the rude age in which he reigned, may be thought expressive of a mild and equitable spirit:—"If he is to punish, the punishment passes not from the parents to the children; but if he is to bestow rewards, they reach to descendants. In regard to involuntary faults, he pardons them without inquiring whether

* Gaubil, Chou-king, p. 24. † Gaubil, Chou-king, p. 37.

they be great or small. In the case of doubtful faults the punishment is light; but a service rendered, though doubtful, receives a large recompense. He will rather not execute the laws against criminals than punish an innocent person. A virtue that delights in preserving the lives of the subjects, gains the hearts of the people."* The following panegyric, addressed by Yu to his prime minister, embraces the duties belonging to that great functionary, combined with others which we are not accustomed to associate with such an elevated station:—"A minister serves me as foot, hand, ear, and eye. If I think of governing and preserving my people, you are my aid; if I am to bestow benefits on the four quarters (of the kingdom), you distribute them. When I see the figure of the ancient dresses, and wish to make similar ones, in which the sun, the moon, the stars, mountains, serpents, and birds of different colours are represented, *you are able to make* these sorts of dresses. When I wish to hear music, the five sounds, the eight modulations, you can distinguish all."† It might be difficult to imagine the surprise of a British premier, if an expectation were intimated that, besides administering all the weighty affairs of a mighty empire, he was not only to recreate the royal ear with songs, but to act as tailor to his majesty. Though these passages appear to deserve notice, as illustrating the ideas early prevalent among Chinese rulers, it will be admitted, that they are ill calculated to adorn the pages of the classical historian.

There is, however, another work, which proceeded undoubtedly from the pen of Confucius, and has

* Gaubil, Chou-king, p. 26. † Ibid. pp. 36, 37.

been the subject of much panegyric. This is the Tchun-tsieou, or Chun-chow, a species of annals which, though directly relating to his native territory of Lou, embrace the most remarkable events that occurred in the empire during his life. The term signifies "summer and autumn,"—a melancholy intimation of the decline into which he considered good government to have fallen towards the close of his days. The Chinese extol this work as a perfect example of historical composition, and fit to serve as a pattern to all nations. Amiot even passes upon it very high praise, boasting of its simple and sublime brevity, and the force and fire with which occurrences are narrated. There is, according to him, no work in Europe in which the causes, progress, and remedy of revolutions, the varied character of public men, the manner in which the Shang-ti (Deity) exalts and subverts thrones, are so well exhibited. In this view, he asserts, it might be a model for all histories.* This, however, is very different from the report of De Guignes, who bluntly terms it a very dry chronicle.† It were much to be wished that Amiot had enabled his readers to share his admiration, by translating at least a few passages; but, except a list of eclipses, which cannot be considered as within the legitimate range of history, we are not aware that any part of the Tchun-tsieou has been clothed in a European dress. He compares it, in one place, to Henault's Chronological History of France, from which we seem justified in considering it as a mere record of dates and facts, though such reflections may be

* Mémoires, tome ii. p. 85; tome i. pp. 47, 48.
† Histoire des Huns, tome i. part ii. p. 148.

interspersed as to afford some colour for his lofty panegyric.

A history of the dynasty of Tang, translated by Gaubil, bears the same character with the more general narrative translated by Mailla.* Of the work said to be composed by Mencius we have no means of forming an opinion.

In the recent numbers of a valuable journal, we find the account of a Chinese history, or rather encyclopædia, written in a different style, and described as possessing distinguished merit. It was produced in the thirteenth century by Ma-twan-lin, a learned man of the school of Tchu-hi. Its object is not to record events, but to unfold the state of the empire, in respect to government, industry, manners, and literature, during successive ages. It is subdivided into numerous heads. Of these the most important are, landed property, population, commerce, revenue, expenditure, army, penal code, sacrifices, imperial ceremonies, music, literature, astronomy. The original work, composing 200 livraisons, five of which may make one of our quartos, brought the subject down only to 1224; but, in the sixteenth century, a supplement was executed by Wang-khe, and another in 1772, by the orders of the Emperor Kien-long.† The author is said to rise above national prejudices; but more copious specimens would be necessary, to enable us to judge whether his work comes under the head of philosophical history, or only of antiquarian research.

Poetry is a branch of Chinese literature which

* Memoires, tomes xv. and xvi.

† Asiatic Journal (2d Series), vol. vii. p. 110-177, &c.

is pursued with ardour and held in high esteem. The Shi-king, an ancient collection, edited by Confucius, is ranked with the Y-king and the Shoo-king among the standard books in which all knowledge is centred. A thorough acquaintance with it is considered essential to those who seek public employment, as it forms a part of their examinations; and there are few men of letters who are not more or less ambitious of distinguishing themselves by composing verses.* Yet, perhaps, the official honour thus conferred on the art, has been one cause which has prevented it from attaining a very improved state; and, "the adherence to ancient laws" is expressly mentioned by Mr Thoms among the circumstances that have checked its progress. The Shi-king, though a great part of it was composed in a very rude age, still constitutes the standard by which poetical excellence is estimated. Europeans find great difficulty in forming any just idea of oriental, and especially of Chinese imagery. A verbal translation into a language so opposite in its construction, can scarcely be effected without sacrificing the spirit of the original. If, again, an attempt be made to transpose it into a metrical version, and clothe it in appropriate language, the native character of the composition must be almost entirely changed. The very terms consecrated to poetry are altogether different in the East and West. Instead of the Alps and the Apennines, the grandeur of mountain-scenery is suggested to the Chinese by the Kwan-lun and the Tan-yu chains, which, though probably more elevated, do not convey to the European

* Morrison's Miscellany, p. 36. Thoms' Chinese Courtship, Pref. pp. 3, 4.

ear the same lofty ideas. For the rose and the violet, we have the flower *lan* and the herb *yu-lu*.* Instead of the dove, the wild-goose portrays to Chinese fancy the image of a tender and faithful lover.† For these and other reasons, their poetry can scarcely become popular among European readers; yet a few notices and specimens, such as may give a general idea of its nature, can scarcely fail to be acceptable.

It may be proper, in the first place, to make some remarks on their peculiar style of versification. The very circumstance of every word being a monosyllable, seems at first view to preclude the attainment of elevated harmony; and the complaint, that

"Ten low words oft creep in one dull line,"

must constantly recur. Yet both Mr Davis and Dr Marshman agree in asserting, that Chinese verse is by no means deficient in harmony.‡ This is produced chiefly by the four accents, which being necessary to vary the sense in the very small number of monosyllabic words, are carefully attended to and decidedly marked. One of them, indeed, called *ping*, is merely the simple sound of the vowel; but the three others, called *tsee*, or deflected, have strong accentual intonations. In poetry, they are made to alternate with each other, so as to produce an agreeable variety, and compose a species of metrical feet; care being taken that the same accent is not repeated too often in a line, nor even in a stanza. As the third always prolongs the word, while the fourth shortens it, quantity forms

* Mohl's Chi-king, *passim*.
† Davis' Sorrows of Han (4to, London, 1829), p. 17, Note.
‡ Clavis Sinica, p. 543. Trans. Asiat. Society, vol. ii. pp. 397, 399.

also an element in their verse. Rhyme is likewise employed, being carried usually through the whole stanza, and extending not unfrequently to sixteen lines; yet, as it recurs only at the end of each couplet, there is even then, as Mr Davis observes, not so much rhyming as in an English sonnet.* A very favourite species of harmony is that called by this writer *parallelism*, or a certain correspondence between the order of the words in two successive lines or members of a verse; which, when happily executed, produces a very pleasing effect. It is remarkable as being, we believe, the only kind of versification employed in the poetry of the sacred Scriptures. Sometimes the same idea is repeated in different words, similarly arranged; as,

> "Because I have called, and ye refused;
> I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded;"

Of which the following Chinese example is given:—

> "The heart, when it is harassed, finds no place of rest;
> The mind, in the midst of bitterness, thinks only of grief."

A second kind of parallelism is where the two members are antithetic, or contrasted with each other; as,

> "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth;
> And that is unreasonably sparing, yet groweth poor."

Chinese example,—

> "Unsullied poverty is always happy;
> Impure wealth brings many sorrows."

A third, called synthetic, is where there is a correspondence in the structure of the line, of noun to noun, and verb to verb. This is peculiarly adapted to their language, where every sound, as it were, has a full meaning, and there is little mixture

* Trans. Asiat. Society, vol. ii. p. 407.

of connecting particles. Mr Davis gives the following example:—

"Thus alone and dauntless he walked, all confident in his courage;
Thus proud and reserved, he must needs possess high talents;
Courage, as if Tsze-loong, the hero, had re-appeared in the world;
Talents, as though Le-pih, the poet, had again been born."

In considering this department of literature under the more important view of sentiment and description, we begin, of course, with the most ancient specimens. It may here be observed, that though poetry is earlier brought to perfection than prose, its infant efforts generally are neither bold nor imaginative. They consist chiefly of maxims or facts turned into verse, partly for the pleasure which the mere sound affords, partly with the view of aiding the memory. Poetry, at first, is closely allied to history and philosophy; and we may thus understand why the most severe of the ancient sages held it in such high estimation. In its gradual progress, it assumes a creative and ideal character, and leaving narration and reasoning to prose, seeks a world of its own in which to expatiate. This step, however, has been only imperfectly made by the muses of China.

The earliest specimens collected by Dr Marshman bear completely the above character, having nothing poetical except the verse. The first known example is said to be the following panegyric, addressed by his people to the Emperor Yao:—

"The tranquillity we, the people, enjoy,
Is wholly the fruit of thine exalted virtue;
No information or knowledge is needed,—
All flows from the sovereign's wise institutions."

Nearly in the same tone are the following laudatory verses, said to be composed by the Emperor Chun:—

"When the chief ministers delight in their duty,
The sovereign rises to successful exertion;
A multitude of inferior officers ardently co-operating."

We may add several moral lines ascribed to his illustrious successor Yu:—

"Within, to be addicted to effeminate pleasures,
Without, to the sports of the field;
To be fond of wine or of music,
Or of palaces elegantly adorned;
To delight in any one of these,
Will be doubtless inevitable ruin."*

Mr Davis has also given a specimen, containing the names of a number of early sovereigns strung into verse, evidently with the sole view of assisting the memory.†

The poetical work which, as already observed, the Chinese regard with the greatest veneration, is the Shi-king,—a selection made by Confucius of the best poems, from the beginning of the monarchy to his own time, the most modern of which are consequently upwards of two thousand years old. Of this compilation only a very few specimens are given in the French Mémoires; but M. Mohl has recently published the entire Latin version made by Père Lacharme.‡ Though somewhat rude and literal, it will enable us to form a tolerably correct idea of this celebrated collection of oriental poetry.

It may be mentioned, that the pieces are in general short, bearing nothing of an epic character, nor even comprising any lengthened narrative. The name of odes and songs has been applied to them by Europeans; yet they do not exactly correspond to what we understand by these terms. They resemble rather

* Clavis Sinica, p. 545-547.
† Trans. Asiat. Society, vol. ii. p. 399.
‡ Confucii, Chi-king, &c., edidit Julius Mohl (Stuttgartiæ et Tubingæ, 1830).

the compositions of Cowper or Wordsworth, and, indeed, many others of those which have been lately published in Britain, under the title of Miscellaneous Poems. Their theme is either drawn from the deep recesses of thought, or descriptive of the state of public affairs as they passed under the eye of the writer. None of them, however, like the ancient specimens already quoted, consist of mere reflections or facts mechanically strung into verse; almost all seek to combine with these a representation of some of the grand or beautiful objects of nature, which, it must be confessed, are often introduced in a very singular manner. The imagery comes first; then follows the reflection or fact, which sometimes has a certain connexion with what precedes, but more frequently none whatever. The same alternation is repeated in each of the succeeding verses, which are often only an echo of the first. The following may serve for a specimen:—

"The bland south-wind breathes upon and cherishes the sap of these plants: hence the grove flourishes, and appears to rise anew. But our mother is distressed with labour and care.

"The bland south-wind cherishes, by breathing on them, the woods of this grove. Our mother excels in prudence and understanding, but we are men of no estimation.

"The cool fountain bursting forth, waters the lower part of the region Tsun. We are seven sons, whose mother is oppressed by various cares and labours.

"Sweetly, tunefully, and with unbroken voice, sings the saffron-bird, *hoang-niao*. We seven sons afford no assistance to our parent."*

* Mohl's Chi-king, p. 13.

The following, in a similar style, describes with some tenderness the parting of two female friends:—

"The swallow is borne through the air with unequal flight. I went a long way with my departing friend. Lifting my eyes, I look, but she no longer appears; and I pour from my eyes, as it were, a shower of tears.

"The swallow now soars aloft, now sweeps downwards. I accompanied my departing friend a very long way. I lifted my eyes and looked; she had vanished from my sight; then, standing, I burst into tears.

"My friend Tchong was without art, of the greatest fidelity; attached to rectitude, and studious of concord; benignant and loving to do good, prudent and cautious in her actions. She exhorted me, a woman of moderate virtue, to honour my husband, who has now gone from among the living."*

There is some pathos in this complaint of broken friendship:—

"The soft and gentle wind brings rain along with it. I and thou were sharers in labour and in poverty; then, indeed, our minds were closely united. But after you became prosperous and happy, you changed your mind and deserted me.

"The soft and gentle breeze gradually rises till it swells into a whirlwind. When we were sharers in labour and poverty, then you cherished me in your bosom; now, having become happy, you have left me, and are lost to me.

"The wind is soft and gentle, yet, when it blows over the top of the mountains, every plant withers,

* Mohl's Chi-king, p. 11.

every tree is dried up. You forget my virtues, and think only of trifling complaints against me."

We shall now give a specimen of the maxims with which the volume is interspersed:—

"Ah! ye great men, to whom is intrusted the rule of the people, sighing, I say, set some bound and measure to your enjoyment of pleasure. Preserve your dignity; employ worthy and upright men in the offices of government; treat them with benevolence; thus the Spirit, when he hears it, will load you with good."*

Another sentence succeeds, repeating the same thing with some variation of words.

The Epithalamia, celebrating the marriage of princes, are among the gayest pieces in this collection. The picture of a perfect beauty, drawn three thousand years ago, is illustrated by images very different from those which would occur to a European fancy:—

"The great lady is of lofty stature, and wears splendid robes beneath others of a dark colour. She is the daughter of the King of Tsi; she marries the King of Ouei; the King of Hing has married her elder sister; the Prince Tan-kong has married the younger.

"Her hands are like a budding and tender plant; the skin of her face resembles well-prepared fat. Her neck is like one of the worms Tsiou and Tsi. Her teeth are like the kernels of the gourd. Her eyebrows resemble the light filaments of newly-formed silk. She smiles most sweetly, and her laugh is agreeable. The pupil of her eye is black, and how well are the white and black distinguished!"†

* Mohl's Chi-king, pp. 113, 120. † Ibid. p. 25.

The following invitation to decent gayety is given at the entrance of the New Year,—a grand period of Chinese festival:—

"Now the crickets have crept into the house; now the end of the year approaches, let us indulge in gayety, lest the sun and moon should seem to have finished their course in vain; but amid our joy, let there be no offence against the rules of moderation. Nothing should transgress the proper bound. Duty must still be remembered. Sweet is pleasure; but it must be conjoined with virtue. The good man, in the midst of his joy, keeps a strict watch over himself."*

Two other stanzas repeat the same ideas almost in the same words.

A considerable portion of these poems deplores public calamities, and stigmatizes the misconduct of the rulers by whom they were occasioned; the selfish ambition of statesmen, the flattery of courtiers, the disregard of truth and rectitude.† Sometimes the writer dares even to accuse Heaven, founding his complaints on the principle recognised in China, that the supreme power ought to bestow immediate and temporal rewards on virtue, and punishments on vice. Thus:—

"The immense and august Heaven has now become unmindful of its usual benignity; it brings famine and calamity upon us, it spreads death among mortals; the august Heaven is now full of wrath, and breathes terror. While it inflicts due punishment on the wicked and guilty, it lays prostrate also the good and innocent, involving them in the same calamity." And elsewhere,—"The august

* Mohl's Chi-king, p. 48. † Ibid. p. 105.

Heaven, forgetting justice, has plunged us into this calamity; it no longer delights in pity;" however, it is added, "if we do not obey the august Heaven, what end will there be to our calamities!"*

Satire assumes often a lighter vein, not sparing even the fair sex. The following is addressed to a lady extravagantly addicted to ornamenting her person:—

"A woman ought to live with her husband even to old age. What, O woman! have you to do with your plaited locks, and those golden ornaments which, entwined in the hair, adorn your head! what with those six pearls hanging from each ear! The weight of your ornaments equals the weight of mountains; and you roll along like a mighty river! It is proper to dress suitably to one's manner and station in life; but, O mad woman! why in this extravagant style!"†

The disorders of a drunken party are not ill portrayed in the following passage:—

"The guests sit down at first with great politeness, treating each other with mutual respect; thus they continue till overcome with wine. They then forget all modesty and propriety, run dancing backward and forward. They raise wild and senseless shouts, overturn the most precious cups, dance in sport, and as they dance, their feet slide from beneath them; their cap, inverted, becomes loosely attached to the head, and seems about to fall off; while their body bends this way and that, and they can scarcely stand; still they madly dance. Some run wildly away, amid tumultuous good wishes from the rest; others remain, and infringe the laws of

* Mohl's Chi-king, pp. 103, 97. † Ibid. p. 20.

virtue. It is well to indulge in wine, but moderation must be carefully observed."*

After this collection had been published by Confucius, poetry still continued to be cultivated; and it was considered to have reached its highest perfection under the dynasty of Tang, between the seventh and tenth centuries. But the poets of this age by no means enjoy the same reputation for gravity and sedateness which distinguished the authors of those pieces inserted in the Shi-king. They are charged with being excessively addicted to the use of wine; and Le-pae-hih, who bore the greatest name among them, fell a sacrifice to this propensity; for, while on a voyage, he indulged to such a degree, that he fell overboard, and was drowned. The modern compositions, though not held in the same veneration, appear to display a considerable improvement. They are still, indeed, only short effusions, composed of mingled reflection and imagery; but these two elements are more naturally and intimately blended, and exhibited in a more poetical form. Mr Davis has furnished us with some specimens of this school. The following is marked by peculiarly bold and lofty imagery:—

"See the five variegated peaks of yon mountain, connected like the fingers of the hand,
And rising up from the south, as a wall midway to heaven;
At night it would pluck, from the inverted concave, the stars of the milky way;
During the day, it explores the zenith, and plays with the clouds:
The rain has ceased, and the shining summits are apparent in the void expanse.
The moon is up, and looks like a bright pearl over the expanded palm.
One might imagine that the Great Spirit had stretched forth an arm
From afar, from beyond the sea, and was numbering the nations."

The genial influence of rain, in a climate where

* Mohl's Chi-king, p. 131.

vegetation is almost wholly dependent upon it, is a somewhat favourite theme.

"See how the gently-falling rain
Its vernal influence sweetly showers,
As through the calm and tepid eve
It silently bedews the flowers.
Cloudy and dark the horizon spreads,
Save where some boat its light is burning;
But soon the landscape's tints shall glow,
All radiant with the morn returning."

The following is supposed to have been written after an era of public calamity:—

"Few were the inhabitants of that fair dell;
Remnants their manners were of other days;
Flourish'd their fields in peace; no impost fell
Midway check'd labour's fruitful course; the lays
Their children sung had 'scaped the general blaze;
Adown the vale was heard the cock's shrill strain;
The watchdog's voice welcomed the morning rays.
Oh! could my bark those happy fields regain,
Long years of toil I'd brave, nor deem my labours vain."

Some of these pieces, like the ancient, display a satirical spirit, from which even the fair sex is not exempted.

"In pearls and gold all gorgeously attired,
No arts could deck her native ugliness;
The demon-king might view her as his own,
She carried terror to a bridegroom's eye."

The picture of a clever but reckless profligate is drawn with some force.

"The paths of trouble heedlessly he braves,—
Now shines a wit, and now a madman raves;
His outward form by Nature's bounty drest,
Foul weeds usurp'd the wilderness, his breast.
And, bred in tumult, ignorant of rule,
He hated letters,—an accomplish'd fool;
In act depraved, contaminate in mind,
Strange! had he fear'd the censures of mankind;
Titles and wealth to him no joys impart;
By penury pinch'd, he sunk beneath the smart.
Oh! wretch, to flee the good thy fate intends!
Oh! hopeless to thy country and thy friends!
In uselessness the first beneath the sky,
And curst in sinning with supremacy.

Minions of pride and luxury, lend an ear,
And shun his follies, if his fate ye fear."

M. Cibot, in the Mémoires sur les Chinois, gives a few specimens, of which the one subjoined, when allowance is made for the disadvantages of a literal translation, appears to us able to stand a comparison with similar compositions in any language:—

THE RETIRED MINISTER.*

"Do you see that leaf, which floats on the surface of the water, goes where the wind drives it, mounts on the waves, sinks with them, and, always wandering, floats backward and forward till it sinks? This is the image of my life. What should I gain now by forming projects? since Heaven wishes me poor, I should in vain pursue wealth. The Ruler of Heaven is my king, my father; let him regulate my destiny at his will. I recognise his goodness in the benefits which my disgrace has procured for me. If he withdraws them, and afflicts my old age with new disasters, I ask only courage and patience. The universe is in his hand; whither can any one fly whom his anger pursues? He overturns thrones with a breath. Famine, war, and pestilence, come forth at his voice. The earth trembles, the sea roars, the thunder rolls beneath his steps; and Death, marching before him, turns cities into deserts. I have seen the false sages confounded, and their artful policy crushed. The foundations of the monarchy are shaken, said they, let us support them by our counsels,—let us oppress the rich by fraud, and let the multitude of the soldiers make the great tremble. . . . Madmen! an insect torments you

* Memoires, tome xiii. p. 529.

with impunity, and you seek to fix the destinies of an empire. Open your eyes, and see the innumerable hordes of Mongols rushing from the depths of the west. The mountains are levelled beneath their steps; terror precedes, victory follows them. I have lost my rank and my fortune, but I have recovered my liberty. Far removed from the storms of the court, and the tumult of affairs, I am now freed from the wants which my fortune created, and the restless desire of augmenting it. The crowd that surrounded me has fled, but my wife and my children have accompanied me. A cottage of twigs is our abode, and, happier than in our ancient palace, where we were always under constraint, we can constantly see each other, and express our mutual love. . . . Oh, Heaven! I bless thee for having conducted me into these wild mountains; thou hast taken away illusions and troubles, and bestowed repose and wisdom. . . . Placed here upon the shore, I contemplate without fear the stormy sea on which for so many years I have sailed. Its waves yet agitated, and the numerous wrecks with which it is covered, teach me whence came the blast which has caused so frightful a tempest, and the innumerable shipwrecks by which it has been followed. Alas! although enlightened by the holy doctrine of the *King*, all China was plunged in the darkness of a thousand foreign sects, and grass often grew beneath the altar of the Supreme Deity, still more unknown to the people than forgotten by the learned and the court. Thus public morals were corrupted in their source. . . . It was necessary that barbarians, destitute of laws and of politeness, should come to banish our licentiousness and our blindness. What

has prevented them from massacring the whole nation, making our various provinces pasture-fields for their herds? But rivers of blood and tears had washed away our crimes. Heaven has restored peace to us. May innocence and all the virtues render it durable! A faithful subject never serves two masters. Were the yoke of the conqueror of the Song offered to me with a principality, I would prefer the most ignominious death. Oh! you, my dear children, the consolation of my griefs, the refuge of my old age, this law does not affect you; you owe only tears to our ancient masters. Respect the hand which has struck them, and learn to fear Him who regards only the vices and the virtues of sovereigns. The tomb is about to open for your father. May your virtues obtain for him the only glory which he desires! Zealously honour your mother, and love me in each other. Communicate my gratitude to the peasants of these mountains. May you love this solitude too much ever to leave it."

Still more recently, a few poems of greater length have appeared, and acquired popularity; of one of which Mr Thoms has favoured us with a translation, under the title of "Chinese Courtship." But its character, strictly considered, appears to be that of a metrical tale or novel; and there is little more of poetical imagery than in similar narratives written in prose. The following passage, however, representing a young lady in despair, and about to commit suicide, in the prospect of being compelled to marry again after the supposed death of a beloved husband, may be given as a favourable specimen:—

" With hasty steps she proceeded to the head of the river,
Which appeared a vast sheet of water flowing to the east;
From both eyes the tears flowed in quick succession,
When she exclaimed,—'This stream shall terminate my life;
This night I shall put an end to all my troubles,
Though I greatly resemble a beautiful flower in full bloom;
But when beaten by the rain, and blown by the wind, it cannot last long;
For leaf after leaf will take its flight, and be borne down by the stream:
Annually the flowers fall, and the streams continue to flow;
But I, when once gone for ever, will be unable to return.'
On raising her head, she worshipped the moon in the firmament,
Which continued to shine refulgent on her attire and person.
'I,' exclaimed she, 'because I will not consent to marry the son of the family Lou,
Forsake my father and mother, and plunge into the stream;
This night my corse shall remain by the side of the river;
Silence shall sit on my countenance, while the waters shall spread far and wide.'"

The drama, as might be expected, constitutes a popular form of Chinese literature; though it labours under great imperfections, and is not regularly exhibited on any public theatre as in this country. Its professors are merely invited to private houses, and paid for each performance. The sovereign himself does not bestow any patronage on the art, beyond hiring the best actors when he wishes to enjoy their wit or talents. No entertainment, however, given by the prince or any great man, is considered complete without a dramatic exhibition; and every spacious dwelling, and even the principal inns, have a large hall set apart for the purpose. Among less opulent individuals, a subscription is occasionally made to bear in common the expense of a play. It is reckoned that several hundred companies find employment in Pe-king; and along the rivers and great canals, numerous strolling parties live in barges.* A troop usually consists of

* Davis' Heir in his Old Age, Pref. p. 9-17.

eight or ten persons, mostly slaves of the manager, who accordingly occupy a very mean place in public estimation. To purchase a free child for the purpose of educating him as an actor, is punished by a hundred strokes of the bamboo; and no free female is allowed to marry into that class.* To this contempt for the performers, as well as to the low standard of the drama among the Chinese, who seem to view it merely as the amusement of an idle hour, may be ascribed the depressed state in which it continues to exist. The dramatic poet has liberty and employment, but he has not honour, which seems equally necessary for the production of any thing great in the arts. Scenery and stage effect, which indeed the places of performance would render very difficult to produce, are never attempted. A theatre can at any time be erected in two hours: a platform of boards is elevated six or seven feet from the ground on posts of bamboo; three sides are hung with curtains of cotton cloth, while the front is left open to the audience.†

Under these humiliating circumstances, there do not seem to have arisen any great names, to which the Chinese people can refer with pride, as national dramatists. Numerous pieces have, however, been produced, particularly under the dynasty of the Tang. A collection has been formed of 199 volumes, from which are selected a hundred plays, supposed to comprehend the flower of this class of productions.‡ Of these only five have been translated, namely, two tragedies, "The Orphan of Tchao," by Father Premare, and "The Sorrows of

* Davis' Heir in his Old Age, Pref. p. 14, &c. Morrison's Miscellany, p. 36.

† Davis, as above, p. 15.

‡ Davis' Sorrows of Han, Pref. pp. 7, 8.

Han," by Mr Davis; and three comedies, "The Heir in his Old Age," by the latter gentleman, "The Circle of Chalk," by M. Stanislas-Julien, and "The Intrigues of a Waiting-maid," by M. Bazin. This, no doubt, is but a small portion of so great a mass; yet, as it consists of favourite productions, chosen by judicious translators, the Chinese drama will not probably have cause to complain of being judged according to such specimens.

On perusing even the best of these compositions, we at once discover that the dialogue is nearly as rude and inartificial as the scenery. Instead of allowing characters and events to be developed in the progress of the piece, each performer, on his first entry, addresses the audience, and informs them who and what he is, what remarkable deeds he has performed, and what are his present views and intentions. On these occasions he speaks completely in the style of a third person, stating, without veil or palliation, the most enormous crimes, either committed or contemplated. The unities, which have been considered so essential to a classic drama, are completely trampled under foot; and even the license as to time and place, to which Shakspeare has accustomed a British audience, is far exceeded. The Orphan of Tchao is born in the first act, and before the end of the drama figures as a grown man. In the "Circle of Chalk," a young lady in one scene receives and accepts proposals of marriage; in the next, she appears with a daughter aged five years. The tragedies labour under a much more serious defect, in the absence of impassioned and poetic dialogue. The performer, in the most critical and trying moments, makes no attempt to

express his sorrows in corresponding language. Action alone is employed, which affords a genuine, indeed, though not very dramatic indication of the depth of his feelings. The hero, in the most tragic scenes, strangles himself, or stabs his enemy, with the same coolness as if he had been sitting down to table. This defect may probably be connected with the national character; with that stately reserve maintained, especially by public men, studious of decorum, and continually under the eye of jealous superiors. This seems the more probable, since, in private life and to intimate friends, they sometimes give utterance to their emotions with considerable warmth. These dramas, however, cannot be read without some interest. The incidents are affecting, the situations striking; there is a continued movement and action; one impressive scene closely follows another, without those long speeches and languid intervals, which can scarcely be avoided by writers who must fill up a drama expected to occupy a certain portion of time and space.

The "Orphan of Tchao" includes a plot of so much interest, that it was adopted by Voltaire as the basis of a successful tragedy. A tyrannical minister, abusing the favour of his sovereign, satiates his vengeance on a hated rival, whom he not only puts to death, but extirpates his family, to the number of three hundred. An infant boy, however, is rescued, and reared by the family-physician as his own son, in which character the youth becomes a favourite of the murderer. On his reaching the age of twenty, the supposed father discloses the secret of his birth to the youth, who then becomes an instrument in avenging the wrongs of his house. The

disclosure gives rise to the most striking scene in the play, and one marked by more than usual animation. Tching-yng, the physician, having prepared the youth by a figurative representation of the history of his family, then proceeds:—

"It is now twenty years since this happened, and the Orphan of the House of Tchao must be now of the same age, and never thinks of revenging his parents; what, then, does he think of? He is handsomely shaped, is above five feet high, knows letters, and is very skilful in the exercise of arms. What is become of his grandfather in the chariot? All the family have been cruelly massacred; his mother was hanged, his father stabbed, and hitherto no revenge has been taken. Sure they do him wrong, when they talk of him as a man of courage.

"*Tching-poei.* My father, you have talked to me a long while, and I seem to be in a dream, for I can comprehend nothing that you speak of.

"*Tching-yng.* Since you are yet ignorant of my drift, I'll speak more plainly. The barbarous man in red is Tou-ngan-cou, Tchao-tun is your grandfather, Tchao-so is your father, the princess is your mother, I am the old physician Tching-yng, and you are the Orphan of the House of Tchao.

"*Tching-poei.* How! am I the Orphan of the House of Tchao? Alas! you kill me with grief and rage. [*He falls down in a fainting-fit.*

"*Tching-yng.* My young master, recover yourself again!

"*Tching-poei.* Alas! you have almost destroyed me. [*He sings.*] If you had not told me all this,

how could I have learnt it? My father, sit down in this chair, and suffer me to salute you.

[*He salutes him.*

"*Tching-yng.* I have this day restored the House of Tchao, but, alas! I have destroyed my own. I have plucked up the only root that was left.

[*He weeps.*

"*Tching-poei sings.* Yes, I swear I'll be revenged on the traitor Tou-ngan-cou.

"*Tching-yng.* Don't make such a great noise, lest Tou-ngan-cou should hear you.

"*Tching-poei.* I'll either die myself or destroy the traitor. [*He sings.*] My father, don't disturb yourself; to-morrow, when I have seen the king and all the grandees, I'll kill the villain with my own hands.

[*He sings, and describes the manner in which he will attack and kill him.*"*

In the Sorrows of Han, the interest is produced by a young lady, who, in spite of the intrigues of a treacherous minister, is introduced into the palace, entirely captivates the monarch, and becomes his favourite queen. The defeated statesman avenges himself by communicating the secret of her beauty to the Khan of the Tartars, who is thus induced to demand her in marriage, with the threat of war in case of refusal. The embassy arrives, and the transaction is concluded in the following cool and summary manner:—

"*Emperor.* Let our civil and military officers consult, and report to us the best mode of causing the

* Du Halde, vol. iii. p. 232-234.

foreign troops to retire, without yielding up the princess to propitiate them. They take advantage of the compliant softness of her temper. Were the Empress Leu-hou alive,—let her utter a word,—which of them would dare to be of a different opinion? It would seem, that for the future, instead of men for ministers, we need only have fair women to keep our empire in peace.

"*Princess.* In return for your majesty's bounties, it is your handmaid's duty to brave death to serve you. I can cheerfully enter into this foreign alliance for the sake of producing peace, and shall leave behind me a name still green in history. But my affection for your majesty, how am I to lay aside!

"*President.* I entreat your majesty to sacrifice your love, and think of the security of your dynasty. Hasten, sir, to send the princess on her way.

"*Emperor.* Let her this day advance a stage on her journey, and be presented to the envoy. To-morrow we will repair as far as the bridge of Pah-ling, and give her a parting feast."

Yet, it must be confessed, that afterwards, in private, he laments his loss in very affecting terms:—

"Did I not think of her, I had a heart of iron. The tears of my grief stream in a thousand channels. This evening shall her likeness be suspended in the palace, where I will sacrifice to it. Since the princess was yielded to the Tartars, we have not held an audience. The lonely silence of night but increases our melancholy. We take the picture of that fair one, and suspend it here, as some small solace to our griefs. Hark! the passing fowl screamed twice or thrice; can it know there is one so desolate as I? Yon doleful cry is not the note of the swallow on

the carved rafters, nor the song of the variegated bird upon the blossoming tree. The princess has abandoned her home. Know ye in what place she grieves, listening, like me, to the screams of the wild-bird?"

Again, however, when intelligence is brought that the object of his tenderness, on arriving at the banks of the Amour, has plunged into the waters, and that the khan, affected by her fate, has delivered up the guilty minister, the tidings are received with the same business-like apathy.

"Then strike off the traitor's head, and be it presented as an offering to the shade of the princess. Let a fit banquet be got ready for the envoy."

These dramas are interspersed with stanzas of poetry, introduced often on the most critical occasions, like the songs in an English opera. These were injudiciously omitted by Premare; but Mr Davis has given some specimens, and M. Stanislas-Julien has translated all those which occur in his piece. In the impassioned scenes of deep tragedy, these effusions cannot be considered as natural or seasonable; yet they are often possessed of merit. The following stanza, put in the mouth of the Khan of the Tartars, though not very likely to be sung by that person, is not devoid of beauty:—

"The autumnal gale blows wildly through the grass, amidst our woollen tents,
And the moon of night, shining on the rude huts, hears the lament of the mournful pipe;
The countless hosts, with their bended bows, obey me as their leader;
Our tribes are the distinguished friends of the family of Han."

With regard to the poems in the "Circle of Chalk," it may be remarked that they form integral parts of

the dialogue, from which they scarcely differ in character; and also that, but for the special indication that they are poetry, they could not be distinguished from the prose.

The comic dramas have the same structure, and nearly the same defects with the tragic. They do not display those varieties and nice shades of character, nor those sallies of humour, which enliven the European; but they are, nevertheless, diversified with striking incidents, and exhibit a genuine picture of Chinese life. They are, in fact, novels in a dramatic form, and the observations on the former species of composition will apply to them. The incident with which the "Circle of Chalk" terminates has a striking similarity to that of the judgment of Solomon. A circle of chalk is formed round the child, of which the two female claimants are desired to take hold, and each draw it towards herself; and she who succeeds in wresting it from the other is to be adjudged the mother. The real parent proves her claim to that character, by refusing to subject the infant to so dangerous a predicament. The coincidence is probably accidental, and the description in the Sacred Volume is much happier and more effective.

A very copious, and, on the whole, interesting department of Chinese literature, is the novel. This term, however, though generally adopted by our countrymen in the East, conveys an erroneous idea to the English reader, who is accustomed to apply it to a series of adventures, having one plot and one interest. Those of China are usually short narratives, which may correspond to the Italian *novelle*, but are really what the French would call *contes*,

and ourselves would denominate *stories*. Where the narration is protracted to any extent, it consists really of several detached plots, loosely strung together. The longest of those of which Du Halde has given a translation, though filling only twenty pages, includes three successive plots. The "Fortunate Union," and the "Two Cousins," extend, indeed, to a length rivalling the English novel; but the former consists of several stories united by a very slender thread; while the latter is little more than a succession of dialogues. In these short narratives it is not attempted, and, indeed, it would be hardly practicable, to give any minute delineation of character, or detail of social intercourse. They exhibit, however, a varied picture of human life, including more of its sober realities than was to be found till very lately in similar works in this country, in which the actors were almost exclusively confined to one class, and the interest excited by a single passion. M. Rémusat, who is so well entitled to speak on the subject, observes,—

"The men and women whom they introduce, are men and women acting naturally within the circle of their passions and motives. Integrity is seen in contrast with intrigue, and honest men involved in the snares of knavery. The characters are generally persons of the middle or intermediate classes, such as magistrates, governors of towns, judges, councillors of state, and men of letters. We might be tempted to regard most of them as the private memoirs of some particular families, composed by an accurate and faithful observer. Visits, and the formalities of polished statesmen; *assemblies, and, above all, the conversations which render them agreeable;* re-

pasts, and the social amusements which prolong them; walks of the admirers of nature; journeys; the manœuvres of lawyers; literary examinations; and, in the sequel, marriage,—form their most frequent episodes and ordinary conclusions."*

It must be observed, however, that some of these particulars, especially those marked in italics, appear to belong rather to French than to Chinese manners. Yet it may be added, that the incidents, as in the drama, follow each other in a lively and rapid succession, and are often original and striking. We shall give an example from Du Halde's principal novel:—

A man, whose brother was supposed to be dead, endeavoured to compel his widow to marry another husband; and, from the power attached in China to this relationship, she found herself without the means of resistance. The lady, therefore, as is too common among Chinese damsels in distressed circumstances, determined to put a period to her life; for which purpose, she suspended herself by a cord to a beam in an inner apartment. It so happened, however, that the cord broke, and she fell on the floor. Yang, the wife and accomplice of her persecutor, being in the outer room, ran in on hearing the noise, but stumbled over the almost lifeless body of her sister-in-law, when her headdress was thrown to some distance. At this moment, a knock at the door announced the arrival of the merchant, who came to carry off the unfortunate widow. Yang, anxious to avoid delay on an occasion when speed was necessary, yet unwilling to appear without a headdress, hastily put on the mourning one of her sister-in-law,

* Pref. Iu-kiao-li, Asiat. Journal, vol. xxiii. p. 789.

and ran to admit the strangers. This headdress happened to be the mark by which they were to recognise their victim. Yang, therefore, was instantly seized, and placed in a chair, where her loud cries, proclaiming the mistake, were drowned by the sound of trumpets and musical instruments, usual on such occasions, and now redoubled to prevent the expected clamour from being heard. Thus, she was hurried into a vessel prepared for her reception, and carried away. It is easy to imagine the dismay of the brother-in-law, who found that he had sold his own wife, to whom he was attached; while the unexpected arrival of the persecuted lady's husband, whose death had been falsely rumoured, released her from farther annoyance.

In the story entitled the "Three Dedicated Chambers," the process of bargain-making, well known in other countries besides China, is represented very much to the life. A man had been long desirous of obtaining on easy terms an elegant mansion which one of his neighbours had built and carefully ornamented. He watched the moment when, as he foresaw, the extravagant habits of this person would compel him to seek a purchaser; and till then kept his views a profound secret. At length the application came. "Then both the father and son, though in their hearts they greedily coveted it, merely returned for answer, that they did not want it. They waited till he entreated them earnestly, and then went over, just to give a look. Pretending not to admire it, they observed that he had built it but indifferently. The apartments were not suited to a private gentleman, and the winding avenues would only impede business. The fine carved doors,

when they were required to keep out thieves, would have no strength. Rooms which should be different, were all alike. The ground and the air were very damp. Such a place as this was fit only to be turned into a nunnery, or a residence for the priests of Fo. If one wished to make family-apartments for one's children, it would never answer." Thus he contrived to lower the pretensions of the proprietor, and to obtain it at a price much under its real value.*

Love and courtship, which occupy such a prominent, and almost exclusive place in European romance, can with difficulty enter into that of a people among whom the sexes are so strictly separated, that the two parties must not see each other till the day that unites them; and where they are required not to take the slightest concern in the affair, but to leave it entirely to be arranged by friends and go-betweens. Yet such is the attractive nature of this affection, and of the vicissitudes to which it is liable, that Chinese poets and novelists, in defiance of all these obstacles, have often contrived to introduce it as a leading theme. Peculiar events and circumstances bring the pair within view of each other, and give rise to a secret passion. One youth, in roaming through a garden, looks into an arbour, and sees two ladies playing at chess; and though they instantly run away, one of them leaves the arrow in his heart. A lover being admitted into the house next to the abode of a celebrated beauty, obtains a sight of her through a chink in the partition-wall. By a trick, which the customs of China render practicable, he finds himself affianced and married to another, possessing none of the charms of his mis-

* Davis' Chinese Novels, p. 166.

tress, yet, though eagerly desirous to prove the fraud, he dares not make any allusion to the stolen glance by which he was so fully assured of it.* But perhaps the most original mode of falling in love, is that of a youth and maiden who happened to live in houses situated on opposite banks of a river, and who, in looking out one day, saw each other's shadows in the water. The young man, observing the lovely image in the stream, says:—"Are you not Yu-kiuen? What should prevent our meeting, and becoming companions for life?" As he spoke, he extended his arms towards the water, as if to lift out the object. The maiden gave only a timid smile; but that was enough. The love-knot was already tied between these two, through the medium of their shadows.†

Farther references will be made to these novels, when we come to treat of the manners and social state of China, many particulars of which they strikingly illustrate.

It would be improper to close this chapter without alluding to the literary labours of the British, resident in China. Considering that they are only a handful in number, and the greater part of their time engrossed by important commercial transactions, it is highly gratifying to find them making exertions which would be creditable to European scholars enjoying the most ample leisure. It must be obvious to the readers of this work, that the several translations and treatises by Mr Davis and Mr Thoms have greatly enlarged our means of estimating Chinese literature and manners. The gigantic efforts of

* Davis' Fortunate Union, vol. i. p. 52-77.
† Davis' Chinese Novels, pp. 63, 64.

the late Dr Morrison, which have been ably seconded by the other residents, were prompted by a higher object. These gentlemen have not only carried on with spirit a monthly periodical published in English at Canton, but they have commenced a similar one written in Chinese, intended for circulation among the natives.* It is difficult to calculate the effect which may, by such means, be produced upon this singular people, so long insulated from all other civilized nations.

* Chinese Repository, June 1833.

CHAPTER II.

Religion of China.

Peculiar State of Religion in China—Simplicity of the Established System—Not Atheistical—Sentiments of Confucius—Imperfect Ideas of a Future State—Belief in Temporal Rewards and Punishments—Atheism professed by many of the Learned—Veneration for deceased Sages and Ancestors—Popular Superstitions—The Tao-tse—Their Delusions—The Draught of Immortality—Favour with some Emperors—Pretensions to cure Diseases—Worship of Fo—How introduced and established—Its Maxims—The Metempsychosis—Ridiculous Applications of this Doctrine—Other Superstitions—Attempts to introduce Christianity—Its present State—Missionary Society—Mr Gutzlaff.

RELIGION in China presents an aspect extremely peculiar. In all the other great kingdoms of Asia, both ancient and modern, it has been administered by a powerful priesthood supported by the state, resting on a complicated creed, and surrounded by the pomp of superstitious rites. But in this empire, the national religion, that, namely, professed by the learned and the great, and which has always laboured to proscribe every other, is founded on very simple principles, comprising scarcely any thing that can be branded with the name of idolatry. The belief of an Almighty superintending Power, under the name of Tien, Heaven, or of the great Shang-ti or Spirit, with sacrifices offered on certain high occasions in his honour, comprehends almost the entire

circle of orthodox faith and observance. Yet, though it is thus elevated above the false doctrines with which the neighbouring countries are infected, it has many deficiencies, and is, besides, deeply imbued with a systematic scepticism.

But the charge of direct atheism, which has been sometimes brought against the primitive religion of China, seems to be without foundation. Some very unintelligible speculations, indeed, said to be derived from the revered source of the Y-king, refer to a mysterious principle or power, called Tay-ki, which, operating through certain active and passive agents, called Yang and Yin, has given form to the various objects which compose the universe. Still the Tien, or great Shang-ti, always appears decidedly superior to the Tay-ki, and as a being at once moral and intelligent.* The appointment of the rites solemnized in honour of this great being, and the instruction of the people in their duties to him, are mentioned among the highest claims of the first emperors to the gratitude of posterity. But the wild superstition of the Tao-tse sect, which soon sprang up and was widely diffused, being viewed with peculiar antipathy by the learned and ruling classes, led them to adopt a colder and more guarded creed. They not only studied to purify it from every taint of enthusiasm, but to exclude whatever might bring it into close contact with human feelings and passions. They presented it as a lofty object which man was to view with veneration, not as a principle that was to be his guide through life, his support in calamity, and his hope in death.

Confucius, who, founding his system upon re-

* Du Halde, vol. iii. pp. 16, 17. Memoires, tome ii. p. 151, Plate.

verence for ancient times, became himself the chief authority upon which the Chinese sought to form their belief, appears to have trodden in the steps of the early sages. Warmly animated with religious sentiments, he treats the subject in a very elevated tone, shows himself fully impressed with the most reverential feelings, and also with the obligation of performing the ceremonies due to the Tien. We find him uttering the following sound maxims :—" Worship the Deity as though he were present.—If my mind is not engaged in worship, it is as though I worshipped not.—Offending against Heaven, there is no supplication that can be acceptable."* He appears even to have felt much respect for the several orders of Quei-chin, or spirits, the existence of which was admitted under the reigning system. " How vast," says he, " is the influence of the Quei-chin ! If you look for them, you cannot see them ; if you listen, you cannot hear them ; they embody all things, and are what things cannot be without. When we are commanded to fast, purify, and dress ourselves, in order to sacrifice to them, all things appear full of them." Still he seems not to have received religion as a principle of action, or even as a sentiment that ought to be made very familiar. He inculcates it as an excellence " to venerate the deities, and remain at a due distance from them ;" and it is stated by his disciples,—" Chee conversed little about curious arts, or brutal strength, or insurrection, or *the deity.*"† The sense of propriety, the beauty of virtue, veneration for ancient maxims, and obedience to the laws, not any motive de-

* Marshman's Works of Confucius, pp. 167, 153, 169.
† Ibid. pp. 390, 508, 467.

rived from above, were the principles on which he founded his system of ethics.*

Another particular, in which the religion of China contrasts disadvantageously even with the least improved of those professed in the Pagan world, consists in the imperfect ideas entertained respecting a future state. In certain crude speculations, indeed, relative to the nature of mind, the souls of the good are represented, after separation from the body, as ascending by their native buoyancy, and mixing with the heaven from which they came.† The rites, too, performed in honour of ancestors, appear accompanied with the belief that their spirits still exist, and are sensible of the homage which they receive. Yet this tenet seems not on any occasion to be held forth, either as the ground of hope, or as the support of virtue. The zealous maintenance of this doctrine by the hated sects of Tao-tse and Fo, and the extravagances ultimately blended with it, afforded to the orthodox professors fresh reasons for expunging all traces of it from their system. In a modern work, it is represented as a false and immoral dogma, the diffusion of which had corrupted all that was pure in ancient wisdom.‡ We have not found in the writings of Confucius any thing decidedly contrary to the belief of a future state; yet he nowhere inculcates it, nor makes it the basis of his precepts. He appears even to have in some degree purposely shunned the subject; and when one of his disciples asked to be instructed how to die well, he answered, "Learn first to live well, and

* Morrison's Chinese Miscellany, p. 34.
† Memoires, tome xii. p. 276.
‡ Du Halde, vol. iii. p. 270-272.

then you will know how to die well." The gloom which involved his latter days was in no degree cheered by those hopes of a better world, which, even without the aid of revelation, so brightly illumined the closing scene in the life of Socrates. Instead of future retribution, the Chinese moralists and legislators endeavoured to support virtue by the sanction of rewards and punishments as administered by Divine Providence in the present world. While Christianity, in accordance with experience, warns us, that, as far as the course of nature is concerned, there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked, and that rain and sunshine are bestowed alike on the just and the unjust, the Chinese hold the doctrine, which, on a superficial view, may appear plausible, that prosperity is sent by Heaven as the reward of a virtuous action, and that every calamity comes as a visitation of guilt. Lo-pi, a high and ancient authority, gives the following maxim as directly drawn from the Y-king :—" All those who do good are loaded with felicity, and all those who do evil are loaded with misery; this is the immutable law of Heaven."* Public calamities in particular, as will be hereafter observed, are uniformly viewed as punishments inflicted for the misconduct of rulers. The Emperor Yong-tching, who had profoundly studied this subject, states as unquestionable, that though Heaven be naturally beneficent, yet when the sovereign or his mandarins violate good morals, the Tien chastises them by sending national distress; thus rendering it the duty of the prince, when his people suffer, studiously to reform his own conduct. These, he said, were the

* Gaubil, Chou-king, p. 129.

maxims of the most ancient sages of the monarchy; and as they operated against himself, they were probably genuine.* The same principle was zealously adopted by Confucius, who says,—"Heaven, in producing and nourishing things, regards them according to their true nature; hence, what is upright it nourishes, what is bent and inclined to fall it overthrows;"† and, according to his disciple Mencius,—"He who accords with the will of Heaven will be preserved; but he who disobeys it must perish." Confucius himself uttered in several instances predictions founded upon it, the accidental fulfilment of which gained for him a credit that his lessons of wisdom had failed to secure.‡ But, in approaching the close of a long life, his extensive observation of human affairs made him sensible that, in their actual train, no such correspondence had existed; a truth which seems to have struck him as a new feature in the history of mankind, —as one peculiar to the evil days upon which he had fallen. We find him thus lamenting: "Virtue ceases to protect its possessor from evil; this overwhelms me with grief."§

It was subsequent to the classic age of Confucius and Mencius, that a decided scepticism on religious subjects was introduced among the learned men of China. This, we suspect, originated with Tchu-hi and his followers, whose doctrines we have already noticed. Mr Davis, indeed, a very competent judge, combats the opinion that the tenets of this teacher were positively atheistical; though

* Grosier, tome xi. p 502-505.
† Collie's Four Books, p. 13.
‡ Mémoires, tome xii. p. 56-58.
§ Ibid. p. 391.

there can be no doubt that such a suspicion was very generally entertained. A learned missionary compares him to Bayle, as the author of a licentious and sceptical system, and observes, that most of his disciples at last adopted the doctrine of materialism.* There is, in fact, a certain stage in the progress of intellect, in which lax notions as to belief are apt to become prevalent. When men first begin to form ideas on religious subjects, their ignorance of nature and incapacity of reasoning make them exceedingly credulous; and doctrines, as well as forms of worship are adopted, in which common sense is palpably violated. The early votaries of philosophy, when they discover the errors committed by the vulgar, are too often led into the opposite extreme, and reject entirely a system in which they find so many proofs of delusion. In this they are confirmed by the pride of singularity, and the ambition of establishing new views. Among the philosophical schools of Greece, with the exception of the very highest, scepticism was a prevailing feature. It is not, in fact, till the structure of the world has been fully investigated, that the impossibility of its having derived existence from any but an intelligent and beneficent Power becomes apparent. Among the Chinese, however, knowledge has always remained in that imperfect state which raises doubts without being able to solve them; and physical science, in particular, is still in a condition so very elementary as not to protect them against the most superficial theories. The attempt of Epicurus to account for the formation of a world by the fortuitous concourse of atoms, has been long abandoned

* Mémoires, tome viii. p. 231.

in Europe, even by the few who still attempt to rear a system of atheism. Yet it seems sober and rational, when compared with the hypotheses which have appeared satisfactory to the minds of the Chinese. That veneration for numbers and linear forms, which we have already noticed, is carried so far as to make them be regarded, not only as convenient for describing objects, but even as somehow connected with their existence. In particular, the *koua*, or eight lines, are represented as holding a most important place in the series of production, and as coming more direct from Tay-ki, the mechanical-forming energy, than the world itself. That power, it is said, created the two effigies (Yang and Yin), they the four images, and these the eight koua, emblems of all existences.* Even Confucius treated of numbers, dividing them into celestial and terrestrial, and deriving the elements from them. Upon these principles Lao-tse boldly advanced the dogma,—"One made two; two made three; and three made all things."† Where such means of framing a world are seriously maintained, this globe cannot appear as necessarily the work of a very exalted agent. It may be observed, however, that scepticism never seems to have been admitted into the established creed of the empire; yet the open profession of it, and also the indifference as to religious belief, which Ricci observed to prevail among the great mandarins,‡ show plainly that they did not find it any bar to their advancement. Father Parennin, even while contending that avowed atheism is less general than it is com-

* Gaubil, Chou-king, p. 45. † Ibid.
‡ Purchas, vol. iii. p. 359.

monly represented, does not deny its prevalence among the grandees to a considerable extent.*

It may be a question, whether the veneration for ancestors and the early sages ought to be branded as a species of idolatry. It is true, that no limits are set to the panegyrics lavished upon them. The first objects of reverence were Yao and Chun, of whom Confucius said, "Only heaven is great, and only Yao could imitate it."† But the philosopher himself, after death had silenced envy, succeeded to a degree of honour which no other individual has attained. Mencius declares, that "from the time when men were created to the present day, none had been equal to Confucius; that he surpassed in virtue both Yao and Chun; and that if the instructions of these great men were entirely lost, his writings would amply supply their place."‡ He is called elsewhere "the crown of the human race, the height of sanctity, the master and model of emperors."§ In honour of him and similar worthies, there have been erected "the halls of ancestors," round which tablets bearing their names are ranged.‖ Thither, on solemn occasions, hundreds go in procession, with flags, banners, and gongs; prostrating themselves before these revered objects, and beating their heads against the ground. A splendid festival is held, when choice dishes are presented, and prayers addressed, inviting them to come down and partake. It is asserted, that there are in the empire 1560 temples dedicated to Confucius, in which are annually killed 6 bullocks, 27,000 pigs, 58,000 sheep,

* Lettres Edifiantes, tome xxi. pp. 134, 135.
† Collie's Four Books, Shang-mung, p. 81. ‡ Ibid.
§ Gaubil, Chou-king. ‖ Ellis, vol. ii. pp. 69, 130, 131.

2800 deer, and 27,000 rabbits. This ceremonial, it is maintained, amounts to a form of demonolatry. Yet, as we are not aware that these departed sages are considered as exercising any influence over the affairs of men, we doubt if even in this extravagant homage they can be said to be actually addressed as divinities.*

It may be remarked, that the higher solemnities in honour of heaven, celestial spirits, and the north star, are monopolized by the government, and can only be performed by the emperor, or by the supreme magistrate in each district. If a private individual, or a priest of Tao-tse or Fo, presume to imitate them, it is declared "a profanation of these sacred rites, and derogatory to the celestial spirits," and is punished with eighty blows. The mandarins are also intrusted with the task of preaching. Twice a-month they hold an assembly of the people under their jurisdiction, and deliver a discourse, inculcating their duties, among which obedience to the civil power holds a prominent place.†

Though we have thus described the only authorized system of belief and worship in China, we have given but a very imperfect idea of the spiritual state of this vast empire. The assertion of some, that religion originates with rulers, and is only a contrivance to keep the multitude in awe, seems completely refuted by the actual religious condition of the Chinese people. In the face of a severe and almost constant proscription, and under the most rigorous penalties, they have rejected the cold and

* Chinese Repository, April 1833.

† Purchas, vol. iii. p. 397. Staunton, Ta-tsing-leu-lee (4to, London, 1810), p. 174. Du Halde, vol. ii. pp. 54, 55.

scanty creed enjoined on them, and adopted others better calculated to impress their feelings and imagination. These, unfortunately, have been often tinged by the peculiar errors and superstitions to which the human mind, unenlightened by revelation, is always prone. Hence, individuals the best qualified to judge have not hesitated to pronounce the Chinese the most superstitious nation on the face of the earth.* Two sects have long divided between them the great body of the commonalty; that of the Tao-tse, and that of the priests of Fo,—the first of native, and the second of foreign origin.

The former is undoubtedly the more ancient, and on several occasions has proved extremely powerful. The means of becoming acquainted with this extraordinary sect are singularly scanty; and it is only by collecting detached notices from various quarters, that we shall be able to convey any idea of their tenets. Writers, even of high authority, have represented them as originating with Lao-tse or Lao-kiun, the contemporary of Confucius, about six centuries before the Christian era.† The national annals, however, show them to have arisen at a much earlier date, and to have been nearly contemporaneous with the origin of the monarchy. Amiot, accordingly, observes, that they already existed in the time of Lao-kiun, though his high reputation and a common enmity to the state-system, caused him to be adopted as their head.‡ It is also true that his philosophic creed bore, as will hereafter appear,

* Le Comte, vol. ii. p. 104. Staunton, vol. ii. p. 272.
† Du Halde, vol. iii. p. 30. Le Comte, vol. ii. p. 98.
‡ Mémoires, tome xv. p. 254.

a very different stamp from the general tenets of the Tao-tse priesthood. Lo-pi, a highly-esteemed adept in Chinese antiquity, refers their origin to the time when men changed their figures seven times in a day;* whence we may at least infer, that he had traced it back to a very remote period. The first mention of it, as we have had occasion to observe, occurs in the reign of Chao-hao, the successor of Hoang-ti, who is generally blamed for not having used more vigorous efforts in order to check the progress of error. Its votaries appear to have studied those particular modes of acting upon the imagination and senses, which were prohibited by the severe rationality of the reigning system. They boasted especially of their power in the performance of miracles, the evocation of demons and of spectres, who were employed sometimes to terrify, at other times to please. One of the priests gained the favour of the emperor Han-ou-ti, by exhibiting to him the image of a beloved queen whom he had lost by death.† It seems not improbable, that the art of painting, then newly introduced, and, perhaps, some rude elements of chemistry, afforded the means of producing these supposed supernatural appearances. This sect also peopled heaven with numerous spirits, or *cheng,* consisting of two orders,—a higher and a lower. The latter were said to appear frequently on earth, and to animate the bodies of those who distinguished themselves by illustrious actions. Nor do they seem to have been without the idea of a supreme existence, called in one place the Tay, or Great Unity, the Immutable and Polar Star, having con-

* Memoires, tome i. p. 129. † Grosier, tome iii. p. 49.

tinually serving him the Ou-ti, or Five Shang-ti, of different colours. They added, that the emperor was his image.* The following very lofty description of this Being is found in a work recently translated by Dr Morrison:†—

> "How great is the supreme Tao!
> Not made, yet existing;
> The end of creatures and annihilations, and the beginning,
> Before the earth and before the heavens.
> Light and glory unite around him,
> Continuing for eternal creations and annihilations.
> In the east he taught our father Confucius,
> In the west he directed the immortal Kin-sien.
> A hundred kings have kept his laws;
> The holy, perfect men have received his instructions.
> The first of all religions,
> Marvellous is it, passing marvellous!"

It is stated, however, in the same work, that Tao was born on earth, under Woo-ting, the twentieth emperor of the Chang dynasty; and that his mother, who conceived through the influence of a divine transforming air, remained eighty-one years in a state of pregnancy. Her offspring, after living 996 years on earth, ascended to the summit of the mountain Kwan-lun.‡

The Tao-tse seem to have delighted in sounding the praises of ignorance, and proscribing that application to letters which was so zealously inculcated by the ruling party. In describing the primeval state, it is said,—"All the fruits of the earth grew spontaneously; men dwelt unhurt amid ferocious animals; the universe was only one family,—they lived in innocence, nothing could be fatal or cause death." It is added,—"The immoderate desire of knowledge has ruined the human race." They ob-

* Grosier, tome iii. p. 49.
† Horæ Sinicæ, pp. 63, 64. ‡ Ibid. p. 59.

serve, moreover, that "the perversion of woman has been the source and root of all evil," and hence the missionaries have discovered a striking coincidence with the account of the fall of man in the Sacred Volume.*

These religionists appear, however, to have chiefly attracted votaries by holding out to them the hope of prolonging, by the application of certain means, the short span of their present existence. The supposed interchange between the condition of spirits and men afforded to many the comfortable belief, that, as they had originally come down from the celestial abodes, they would after death re-ascend, and occupy there a more conspicuous station. But to the princes and great men, these sectaries recommended themselves chiefly by the wild and delusive hope of an earthly immortality; for to those who possessed every good that this world could bestow, its perpetual duration was, of all boons, the most desirable. That there existed somewhere on earth a fountain possessed of this fabled and marvellous virtue, was a doctrine always held by this visionary sect. In one account, it is said,—"On the summit of the mountain Kwan-lun is a garden, where a soft zephyr blows without ceasing, and agitates the leaves of the beautiful Tong trees by which it is surrounded. This enchanted garden is placed near to the closed gate of heaven; its waters are the yellow fountain, which is very lofty and most abundant; it is called the Fountain of Immortality; those who drink of it never die." Elsewhere it is said, "Life came from it, and it is the road to heaven."† On other occasions, this fountain was placed on a distant

* Mémoires, tome i. pp. 106, 107. † Ibid. p. 106.

island, in the midst of the ocean. But the most dangerous pretenders were those who boasted the skill of being able, out of certain precious materials, to compound a liquid possessed of the same wonderful quality. Nor did they prepare for this purpose a simple or harmless fluid, but something which, by giving an excessive elevation to the animal spirits, seemed to bear testimony to its virtues. The stimulating drugs by which this effect was produced exhausted the frame, brought on first an incapacity for exertion, and finally a premature old age, which soon ended in death. The more philosophic adherents of the sect, however, lived a retired and sequestered life, seeking "a country of delight and felicity, inhabited by sages, who avoided death by improving the faculties of the soul, and disengaging them from the senses by meditation and forgetfulness of all things."

Besides the ill-earned favour which these impostors obtained at the court of several emperors, there were several occasions in which they acted a conspicuous part in public affairs. Even Ou-ouang, who, with his father, Ouen-ouang, was one of the chief founders of literature and philosophy, when he aspired to the throne by deposing Cheou-sin, sought aid from the votaries of this sect. He was joined, accordingly, by several of their leaders, who passed for divine spirits in human shape, and one of whom was said to have fought and conquered under the great Hoang-ti, upwards of 2500 years before our era.* These enthusiasts distinguished themselves in the field; and their wild pretensions had probably a powerful influence in animating the courage of the troops. When, therefore, he had com-

* Mémoires, tome xv. p. 230-237.

pleted his triumph, they fully anticipated a rich harvest of honours and rewards, and were accordingly not a little surprised to see the chief dignities of the state distributed among warriors of a totally different persuasion. At length the new emperor sent for them, and expressed the warmest admiration of their valour; which, he declared, left no longer any doubt that they were Cheng, or celestial spirits, who, in kindness to man, had assumed a mortal shape, and whose only aim must be to regain an exalted place in their native skies. He offered to them, therefore, a choice of some beautiful retreats in the bosom of distant mountains, where, freed from every worldly encumbrance, they might devote themselves entirely to heavenly contemplation. The leaders, who had fully prepared their minds to encounter the perils of earthly greatness, were much disappointed by this proffered kindness; but his majesty, who had determined not to allow them any share in the administration, was of too firm a character to admit of opposition; and they were accordingly obliged to set out without delay for their secluded abodes.*

The Tao-tse sect, at a subsequent period, attained a guilty though temporary pre-eminence. This was under the tyrannic rule of Chi-hoang-ti, who adopted, to the fullest extent, their enmity against the learned class. The whole scheme of Chinese government, as founded upon knowledge, was for a time subverted, and the greatest efforts were made to extirpate every trace of it from the empire. Their influence, however, terminated with the short dynasty which supported itself by such odious and

* Mémoires, tome xv. p. 251.

violent proceedings. That of Han, which succeeded, pursued a policy directly opposite, banishing the Tao-tse, and endeavouring to repair the havoc that had been committed during their ascendency. They have since contrived to insinuate themselves into the favour of several emperors, but have never been able to obtain supreme power, or to shake the established system.

The Tao-tse, considered even as the ministers of a popular religion, have, for nearly 2000 years, been rapidly declining, and now occupy a very subordinate place. This has been chiefly owing to the introduction of the doctrines of Fo, which, from different causes, have proved more generally attractive. The pretext, indeed, of bestowing perpetual life, on which their influence chiefly rested, could scarcely survive the lapse of successive ages, during which all those on whom this pretended gift was bestowed, and all who were supposed to possess the secret of procuring it, had sunk into the tomb like other mortals. The Tao-tse, however, still continue to reside in convents, and to practise with some success those delusions by which money is extorted from the vulgar. They foretell future events; they point out the mode of obtaining good fortune; they sell bands of paper covered with magical figures, particularly that of Tchin-tou, the chief of the demons. These, suspended from the neck of the purchaser, or the gate of his house, are supposed to preserve him from that evil Power and his wicked associates. In particular, they enjoy still a very extensive practice in the cure of diseases. When called, however, they do not pay the slightest attention to the patient or his symptoms, but direct all the resources of their art

against the malignant spirit by whom he is supposed to be assailed. Different modes are employed for disarming the wrath of this tormentor. Some endeavour to sooth him by presenting delicate dishes, burning in his honour gilded or painted papers, and addressing him by the most flattering appellations. Others, preferring a bolder method, utter loud cries, raise a tremendous sound of gongs, or load him with the bitterest execrations, thereby seeking to terrify him from the haunted residence. Some, at midnight, convey the patient by secret paths to a distant spot, where they hope his enemy will not be able to trace him out. A different scheme is adopted by certain practitioners, when called to a house situated on the bank of a river. They construct a little paper ship highly ornamented, and, having by various arts allured the spirit to enter, suddenly throw it into the water, when it is rapidly swept away by the current.*

Although by these arts the Tao-tse priests still retain some credit with the vulgar, the religion of Fo has, notwithstanding, attained so complete an ascendency, that it may be considered as the popular belief throughout the empire. It is evidently the same with that of Boodh, or of the Lama, which has its central seat in Thibet; and, indeed, in Chinese pronunciation, the sounds of Fo and Boodh pass readily into each other. This system, long since expelled from India, where it once flourished, has acquired a firm hold throughout all Eastern Asia; in Tartary, where it bears the name of Shamanism; and in the Oriental Peninsula, where the same idol is revered under the appellation

* Klaproth in Nouvelles Annales des Voyages, May 1833.

of Gaudma. Its introduction into China is comparatively recent, being referred by the most authentic accounts to about the sixty-fifth year of the Christian era, in the reign of Ming-ti, the fifteenth prince of the Han dynasty. This sovereign, proceeding upon a speech made, or supposed to be made, by Confucius, that "the Most Holy was to be found in the west," sent messengers in that direction to search for a fitting object of adoration.* Their steps naturally led them to the court of the Grand Lama at Lassa, where they would see the ceremonies of this religion celebrated with the most dazzling pomp. They appear to have considered the scene as amply fulfilling their expectations, and brought with them several bonzes, or priests of this faith, who were received with the courtesy usually accorded to strangers. Their sect, however, experienced the uniform opposition of the learned bodies, and was often exposed to bloody persecution. They enjoyed, nevertheless, intervals of high influence with individual emperors, particularly in the fifth century, during the first Song dynasty, and afterwards in the ninth, under Hien-tsong and Y-tsong, to one of whom a finger and to the other a bone of Fo became objects of profound adoration.† During these seasons of favour, and at times when general disturbance protected them from notice, they spread so widely, and struck such deep root, that all attempts to eradicate them were given up as hopeless. A still more auspicious period has arrived since the throne was occupied by the present Tartar dynasty,

* De Guignes, Histoire des Huns, tome i. part ii. p. 377. Du Halde, vol. iii. p. 34.

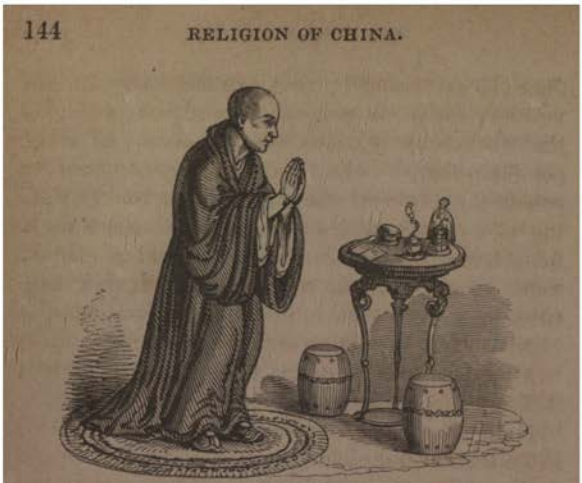
† Du Halde, vol. i. p. 406-410. See above, vol. i. pp. 91, 92.

whose native religion was Shamanism,—a branch of that of Fo, scarcely differing from it except in name. Kang-hi, indeed, whose conduct in this respect has been imitated by his successors, gave his decided support to the ancient faith, and to the simple ceremonies which it enjoined. But as he himself performed also the rites of Fo, and even considered them as conducive to morality, there can be no doubt that they have enjoyed full toleration, and even some share of imperial favour.

The doctrines and usages of this widely-diffused system may be more conveniently illustrated, when treating of countries where it is publicly professed, and established in all its pomp. In China, in consequence of the discouragement to which it was long exposed, it exists in a more imperfect form; its ministers are in a depressed condition, and obliged to employ the meanest arts in order to preserve and extend their influence. The humble attitudes in which

A Bonze begging.

they are seen soliciting charity, intimate the degradation to which they have found it necessary to descend. The Romish missionaries were particularly struck with the great similarity between the ritual of this and of their own worship; so that some, whose religion was only superficial, could scarcely perceive any distinction. It may be remarked, however, that



Priest of Fo.

the features in which this resemblance consists, are those which Protestants reject as unwarranted by Scripture,—the burning of incense, the worship of images, and particularly of a female with a child in her arms, called the Universal Mother, and who much resembled the Madonna,—the extensive monasteries, in which professors of both sexes immured themselves, abandoning their relations and the world, —the stringing and counting of beads, and even the coarse robe bound with cords, worn by the chiefs of the monastic orders.* The usual costume of the priests of Fo is exhibited in the foregoing plate, which is from an original Chinese drawing.

The disciples of the teacher just named, like those of Boodh in India, are branded with atheism; and, indeed, they do not seem to acknowledge any intelligent First Cause as the author of existence. All

* Ellis, vol. i. p. 354. Staunton, vol. ii. pp. 270, 271. Mémoires, tome iv. pp. 316, 317.

their objects of worship are men, elevated into divinities; yet these are raised to so lofty a height, that they scarcely differ from the deities of other popular systems. Fo, in particular, supposed to possess the power of pardoning all sins and procuring every good here and hereafter, holds a rank little lower than that of supreme. Their ethical code, we are told, is comprised in the following rules:—

Not to kill any living creature.
Not to take the property of another.
To avoid impurity.
Not to lie.
To abstain from wine.

These maxims, if we except the extreme severity of the first and the last, are worthy of approbation. Morality is strongly supported, too, by the doctrine of rewards and punishments beyond the present life. This part of their creed, when contrasted with the silence of one of the Chinese sects on the same great subject, and the palpable delusions of the other, may probably be the chief cause of their very extensive popularity. Yet it is combined with ideas so fantastic as to give some colour to the attacks of their opponents, who represent it as a tenet equally absurd and pernicious.

The leading principle of the system which bears the names of Fo and Boodh, as also of the Braminical faith in India, is the metempsychosis,—an article of belief according to which the soul of man after death passes into and animates the body of other men, and even of the lower animals. It is stated that Fo himself, before disclosing his grand doctrine to the world, had passed through eight hundred

transmigrations, in the course of which he assumed the form of dragons, of white elephants, and of monkeys. If a man conducts himself in this life strictly according to the precepts of his religion, he may rest assured of rising in the next to the dignity of mandarin, general, or even of prince. If he follows a contrary conduct, he may justly dread that he shall be born anew in the condition of a labourer, a beggar, or even of a horse, a hog, or some other despised animal. According to the soundest interpretation, his lot depends on the observance of those salutary precepts which this system really inculcates; but often, it is asserted, the most lavish assurances are given to such persons as think proper to confer gifts on the bonzes. These priests are said to invite their votary to look into a magic pool, which reflects, not what he now is, but what he will be in his next form of existence. If he is dissatisfied with the image, hopes are held out that, in the event of a change in his conduct, a corresponding improvement may succeed. Accordingly, if he adopts a virtuous course of life, or, as is alleged, if he propitiates the holy men by liberal donations, the second glance into the mystic water exhibits a wonderful transmutation. Instead of his former humble attire, he sees himself invested with the costume of the highest offices in the state; while the female, who had viewed with dismay her person arrayed in tattered weeds, beholds herself an empress, decked in the richest robes and jewels.* The same author relates, that thieves, on being apprehended in the act of robbery, have been found covered with papers written for them by the priests, as amulets to secure

* Du Halde, vol. iii. p. 276.

success in their nefarious undertaking. Criminals, it is said, have mounted the scaffold with exultation, boasting that they were about to be transported to the bright kingdom of the west, where Fo was waiting to receive them. Young men of this persuasion, it is asserted, when courting girls, not unfrequently attempt to persuade them that they promised marriage in a former life, and are now bound to fulfil their engagement. Nay, lovers, whose union was prevented by the opposition of friends or other obstacles, have been known to consign themselves together to a voluntary death, in the hope of being born again under circumstances when fate would no longer oppose a bar to their wishes.*

Le Comte has related some ludicrous instances of the manner in which the bonzes are wont to turn this creed to their own profit. Two of them happening to espy a pair of fat ducks in a farm-yard, were seized with an earnest desire to feast upon them. With this view they drew near, and began to weep and lament bitterly. The good woman who owned the fowls, on inquiring the cause of their affliction, was informed that the ducks were their deceased parents, whose assured destiny of being sold, killed, and eaten, they were now deploring. She endeavoured to console them by an assurance that the animals would be well treated; but, finding that nothing else could assuage their sorrows, she at length presented to them the two objects of their tenderness. After profuse expressions of thankfulness, and making twenty prostrations before their feathered relatives, they carried them home;

* Du Halde, vol. iii. pp. 272-274.

when these revered ancestors were immediately plucked, put to the spit, and afforded a hearty meal to their ingenious offspring. Mention is also made of a prince of the blood who had lost a son, for whom he was deeply grieved. The bonzes made known to him, that the soul of the youth had passed into the body of a boy who was now in the heart of Tartary; adding that, if a large sum were bestowed upon them, they would undertake to trace him out, and bring him to his afflicted parent. The father supplied them amply; and, without the expense or trouble of so distant a journey, a child was in due time provided in the room of the one whose loss he bewailed.*

The missionaries, it is related, have sometimes found this creed advantageous to their views. Application was one day made to them by a pensioner of the emperor, who was induced to change his religion for the following reason:—The bonzes had warned him that, in return for the good things he enjoyed in this life, he must prepare to spend the next as one of the post-horses, which convey despatches from province to province; but they held out the prospect, that if he ran well and consumed little provender, his subsequent birth would be in a more elevated station. The poor man, however, declared that this equine destination continually haunted his mind; that even in sleep he seemed to hear the crack of the whip, and awoke often in a cold sweat, scarcely knowing whether he were a man or a horse. Although, therefore, he did not feel any decided preference for the doctrine of

* Le Comte, vol. ii. pp. 111, 112.

the foreigners, he had determined rather to be a Christian than a beast. The fathers could not be greatly pleased by a conversion founded upon such motives; but, considering that God might make use of men's ignorance and folly to bring them to himself, they admitted him to instruction, and had reason to believe that he ultimately embraced the faith on more rational grounds.*

Although transmigration of the soul from one living creature to another be the fundamental doctrine of the popular creed, their belief still finds room for a heaven and a hell, though the circumstances under which men are placed in these several abodes are not very exactly defined. The upper region would seem to be reached only by those who have attained to some extraordinary excellence. There they join a numerous race of spirits, to whom the Yo-hoang, or chief of immortal beings, distributes their various employments, among which is that of ruling the elements, and bestowing rewards and punishments here below.† On the other hand, for such as have sunk peculiarly deep in guilt, a place of punishment is prepared, and the moment that their breath departs, He-kang-fang, the prince of the demons, sends his *lohan* or spirits to drag them down into his gloomy mansion. The bonzes introduce another character, who appears to be decidedly of Chinese origin, and superadded to their original pantheon. This is Yen-vang, lord of the world beneath, who seems to perform the functions which

* Le Comte, vol. ii. p. 109.
† Du Halde, vol. iii. p. 279.

Grecian mythology assigned to the Fates. He keeps a record, wherein is entered the birth of every human being and the events of his life, till at length, by a stroke of the pencil, he effaces the name, and the mortal existence of the individual at once closes. Yen-vang, however, by following the Chinese mode of bookbinding, was once led into a strange error. He took a thin slip of paper, and used it as a thread to sew up one of the volumes, or livraisons, in his fatal register; but he did not remark that there was inscribed thereon the name of a personage called Pung, who consequently escaped the destined erasure. The consequence was, that this man lived 800 years, and espoused successively seventy-two wives, nor did there appear any prospect of a termination to his life and marriages. The seventy-second lady, however, happened to inherit an ample portion of curiosity. Having arrived, after death, in the infernal court, she made the most earnest inquiries into the cause of her husband's extraordinary longevity; and at length, through an acquaintance formed with his grandfather, the mystery was disclosed to her. Unfortunately for Pung, his departed consort was imbued with another frailty of her sex. She could not confine within her own breast so remarkable a secret, and this extraordinary incident became soon the talk of the lower regions. It then unavoidably reached the ears of Yen-vang, who presently called for the book, and seeing his mistake, with one stroke blotted out the patriarch from its pages and from the earth. Unluckily, this incident is stated to have taken place at a period when the mode of binding here described

was yet unknown; but this circumstance does not seem to have shaken the faith of the Chinese believers.*

Self-torture, under almost all superstitious religions, is supposed to confer on the sufferer a peculiar merit. Though not carried to the same extravagant height in China as in India, it is still extensively practised, and is made subservient to the interests of spiritual begging. Nieuhof heard of a reputed saint who continually wore iron chains, till the flesh became a receptacle for worms, which he saw with pleasure deriving nourishment from his person. The same traveller observed a man who, muttering to himself, violently struck his head against a stone; and two others who furiously beat their heads against each other. These last operations were considered as establishing a decided claim for alms.† Le Comte met with a young aspirant, who had shut himself up, and was carried about in a sort of sedan-chair, the interior of which was set round with nails, so that he could not move on the one side or the other without being wounded. He persuaded the people that these spikes, in proportion to the tortures which they inflicted, acquired a supernatural virtue, rendering them well worth the moderate price of sixpence. The Frenchman having some of them tendered to him, endeavoured, in a discourse of some length, to expose the wild delusion under which the youth laboured, exhorting him to renounce it. The other replied, with true Chinese equanimity, that he felt exceedingly obliged

* Du Halde, vol. iii. pp. 283, 284.
† Pinkerton's Voyages, vol. vii. p. 240-250.

for so much good advice, but would be still more indebted to him if he would purchase a dozen of his nails, the spiritual value of which he continued to extol in the most extravagant terms.*

The priests of Fo, and particularly the ministers of the idol-temples, appear also to claim the power of bestowing temporal good and evil, and particularly of curing diseases,—pretensions which, of course, often prove fallacious. A man, whose favourite daughter was ill, had paid large sums at a neighbouring temple, and obtained, in return, promises of a speedy recovery, which were so far from being realized, that the disease continued to make progress till it came to a fatal termination. The father, in despair, being determined upon revenge, raised an action at law against the god, arguing, that having received much money under promise of effecting the cure, he had either pretended to a power which he did not possess, or, having that power, had not exerted it; in either case the fraud was manifest. As the judge, however, delayed proceedings until he should receive instructions from court, many remonstrances were made to the plaintiff upon the danger of prosecuting his suit against this supernatural defendant; but grief had made him reckless. A subpœna was therefore issued against the god, and the charges being fully proved, he was banished the kingdom, and his temple demolished.†

Lord Amherst's embassy ascertained the existence of a colony of Jews in Ho-nan, so ancient as to be unacquainted with any part of the Scriptures ex-

* Le Comte, vol. ii. p. 113. † Ibid. p. 105.

cept the Pentateuch. Their numbers have much diminished, and they now possess only one synagogue in Kai-fong-fou.*

A considerable body of Mohammedans still reside in the provinces along the frontier of Eastern Tartary. They entered China probably in the train of Zingis and his posterity, by whom individuals of all religions, who engaged to fight in their armies or render any public service, were equally favoured. The downfal of that dynasty reduced their adherents to the condition of a subject tribe; and though, under the family of Ming, as well as that now on the throne, they have been left unmolested, they still appear to feel impatient under the yoke, and very recently broke out into a violent insurrection.† According to Gutzlaff, their religion consists in little more than in avoiding idolatry, and that not always very completely.‡

Considerable efforts have been made by the missionaries to introduce into this great empire a knowledge of gospel-truths, and not without some hope of success. In fact, they encounter less obstruction in the disposition of the people and the frame of society, than in perhaps any other country of Asia. There is not, as in India, a sacerdotal caste holding a rank and influence superior to all others, nor is the national religion so interwoven with the habits of ordinary life that it cannot be renounced without the sacrifice of every temporal good. The Chinese are abundantly superstitious; but the priests possess neither place nor power, and, instead of exacting

* Ellis, vol. i. p. 427. Gutzlaff's Journal, p. 387.
† Asiatic Journal, vol. vi. p. 132.
‡ Gutzlaff's Journal, pp. 225, 387, 388.

homage, are obliged to court the favour of their votaries. The people, also, contrary to what has been sometimes represented, take a peculiar interest in the opinions of foreigners, and imbibe with readiness new ideas on any subject. Even the emperors have generally felt a disposition to welcome strangers who came under a respectable character, and brought the means of rendering themselves either useful or entertaining. The greatest obstacle has ever been found among the mandarins, and particularly the *pous*, or central boards, who, as already observed, employ their influence over the government in a relentless proscription of every new, and, above all, every foreign sect or institution. As soon as any novelty begins to spread, they never remit their efforts till they have excited the alarm of the court, and drawn down upon it the heavy hand of law.

These observations are too amply confirmed by events which we have already traced in the progress of the Romish missionaries, both Portuguese and French. The converts of the latter were reckoned to amount, at one time, to 300,000, including some persons of distinction, and even princes of the blood. Yet, after successive persecutions, Lord Macartney, in 1792, found four churches in Pe-king allotted for Christian worship, and understood the number in the provinces to be also considerable. But Kea-king, the succeeding emperor, enforced the statute against them; three out of the four in the capital were suppressed, and similar severities were practised in other cities; still, in 1810, Sir George Staunton received from the Rev. J. B. Marchini the following statement, as to the actual condition of the converts in China:—

	Bishops.	Mission-aries.	Native Priests.	Converts.
Quang-tung, Quang-see, and Hai-nan,	1	...	5	7,000
Pe-che-lee, Shan-tung, Leao-tong, and Eastern Tartary,	1	11	18	40,000
Kiang-nan and Ho-nan,	1	...	6	33,000
Fo-kien, Formosa, Tche-kiang, and Kiang-see,	1	5	8	30,000
Se-tchuen, Koei-tcheou, and Yun-nan,	1	3	25	70,000
Shan-see, Shen-see, Kan-su, Hou-quang, and Eastern Tartary,	1	6	18	35,000
	6	25	80	215,000*

Neither the many sufferings endured in the Christian cause, nor the increased rigour with which the empire has been shut against foreign creeds, have damped the generous zeal with which Protestant societies have lately been animated. In 1795, an extensive association was formed, named afterwards the London Missionary Society. Though aware of the numerous difficulties which that country presented, they determined upon sending one individual to make the attempt; and the choice fell upon Mr Robert Morrison, who, by his signal services to religion and literature, has amply justified it. He arrived at Macao in September 1807; and, on viewing the vast field which lay before him, was sensible that he could not expect any degree of success until he had overcome the formidable obstacles which attend the acquisition of the Chinese language. In devoting himself to this pursuit, and at the same time studying concealment, he sacrificed every comfort. He never left the house in which he lodged, spending his whole time in an apartment under ground, wear-

* Staunton's Miscellaneous Notices relating to China (8vo, Lon. 1822), p. 86.

ing the native dress, and enjoying no society but that of his teacher. His health suffered by this rigorous confinement, but he nevertheless attained a proficiency which procured for him the respect, both of the Americans resident at Canton, and of the gentlemen connected with the East India Company. He received, in consequence, an appointment in the British factory, which insured additional means for promoting the important objects on account of which he had visited that remote region. He began to give regular instructions to the few Chinese who could be induced to attend, but it was only with locked doors and in the greatest secrecy. He soon felt, however, that the best spiritual service which could be rendered to the natives was to print, in their own language, translations of the principal books of the Holy Scriptures. He commenced with a version of the Acts of the Apostles, prepared by a Catholic missionary, and which only required revision. Being satisfied with the result of this first attempt, he next undertook to translate the whole of the New Testament, in aid of which the British and Foreign Bible Society transmitted the sum of £500. In the end of 1813, this useful employment was accomplished, and an edition of 2000 copies, with 5000 of a catechism, was printed. Mr Morrison, to lay farther open to European students this singular language, engaged in the very laborious task of preparing a Chinese and English Dictionary on a most comprehensive plan. This work was esteemed so valuable, that the Company defrayed the entire charge of printing it, and sent out to Macao types and presses for that purpose.

In the year 1813, he received the aid of the Rev.

W. Milne, sent out by the same Society. Through the jealousy of the Portuguese, this gentleman was not allowed to settle at Macao, upon which he repaired successively to Java, Penang, Malacca, and other places where Chinese emigrants have settled. Mr Morrison had early formed the project of founding an Anglo-Chinese College, so that the two nations might become acquainted with each other's literature, and the moral wall of separation between them be in some degree removed. Accordingly, on being joined by Mr Milne in 1818, this plan was discussed, and warmly approved of; Dr Morrison contributing the sum of £1000, and agreeing farther to subscribe £100 annually for five years. With the aid of other distinguished friends, the first of these gentlemen was enabled to lay the foundation of this institution at Malacca on the 11th of November. It has enjoyed the learned and pious instructions, not only of its founder, but of Mr Medhurst, who was sent out by the Society to co-operate with him, and of Mr Collie, to whose translation of the "Four Books" we have been much indebted. In this institution there are now educated thirty natives of China, who, as is justly observed, acquire more useful knowledge than is attainable by the son of their emperor. Five of them have been instructed in the truths of Christianity, which they are at present employed in spreading among their countrymen.*

No Protestant missionary had as yet attempted to penetrate into the interior of these vast dominions; but the path has been recently opened by Mr Gutzlaff, a native of Stettin in Prussia, who went to

* Ellis' Introduction to Gutzlaff's Journal, pp. liv. lxvv.

Siam along with Mr Tomlin, a member of the London Society. At Sincapore he formed a matrimonial connexion with Miss Newell, whose temper was entirely congenial to his own; but after a year, this happy union was painfully terminated by the lady's death. He then determined to carry into execution the project, which he had for some time cherished, of entering China; and he found less difficulty than he expected in engaging a passage in one of the numerous junks which proceed from Siam for the ports of that empire. Sailing on the 3d June 1831, he arrived on the 22d September at the great northern emporium, Tien-sing-fou. He remained there nearly a month, not only unmolested, but treated with favour and kindness, for which he was in a great measure indebted to the benefits which his medical skill enabled him to dispense. Curiosity, also, seems to have been strongly felt; since an individual offered the captain £700 for him, with the view of exhibiting his person for money. He himself thinks, that, if he had understood the local dialect, he might have penetrated to Pe-king. He returned, however, with the junk, and visited the port of Kin-chow, in Tartary, where he was equally well received.

In 1832, he accompanied the Amherst in her trading voyage along the eastern coast; and afterwards joined a similar expedition, undertaken by the Sylph, the particulars of which will be narrated at some length in a separate chapter. The general result appears to be, that though in present circumstances the preaching of the Gospel could not be safely attempted, translations of the Scriptures and religious tracts may be distributed to almost any extent, and

will be received with avidity.* These "silent preachers," as Mr Gutzlaff calls them, though sought at first only as a vehicle of new ideas, may produce the most beneficial effects, and prepare the way for a more general diffusion of religious knowledge.

* Gutzlaff's Journal, pp. 232, 302, 431, 432, 433, 438.

CHAPTER III.

Government and Political State.

Peculiarities of Chinese Government—A complete Despotism—Reverence for the Sovereign—Checks on his Mal-administration—Chief Officers, or Mandarins, how chosen—Examinations—Tribunals or Boards—Censors—Han-lin, or Literary Board—Governors—Their Power, how checked—Tartars and Chinese—Penal Code—Nature of Punishments—Revenue—Its Sources and Amount—Military Force—Causes of its Inefficiency—Exaggerations on this Subject.

THE government of China is perhaps the most simple in its structure, and at the same time, in many respects, the most remarkable of any in the world. It is a complete and unmixed despotism. In absolute monarchies, there are usually certain privileged bodies, who exercise local jurisdiction, and possess hereditary claims to respect and obedience. Even the proud epithet of king of kings, assumed by the greatest of the ancient conquerors, intimates that they merely held the supremacy over princes, who in their turn exercised sovereign power within their own territories. Such was the aspect exhibited by China during the earlier ages, when the provinces were governed by hereditary rulers, forming in fact so many petty kings, who, though they remained in vassalage to their imperial head, eagerly embraced every opportunity of gaining independence. Hence, for several centuries, this vast empire was in a state

of feudal anarchy; and the sovereignty existed only in name. When, however, the warlike founder of the Tsin dynasty had crushed these numerous principalities, his successor, Chi-hoang-ti, resolved to destroy every power which did not entirely depend upon the monarch. The governors of provinces, accordingly, were no longer permitted to hold their place by birth or prescription, but were removable at the will of the emperor. The family-influences which sprung up afresh under weaker monarchs, appear to have been finally abolished during the domination of the Mongol conquerors; so that, even under the revived sway of the Ming family, the troubles which shook the empire arose chiefly from contests between the princes of the imperial house, or from insurrections among the lower orders of the people. The conquest by the Mantchoos put an end to all that remained of authority, independent of the imperial will. Even the municipal administration, which in early states bore a very republican form, and of which, in Hindostan, striking traces still remain, has in China been completely obliterated; and every office, from the highest to the lowest, is administered by persons of royal appointment.

The supremacy of the monarch is farther secured by the absence of any body of men (besides his own functionaries) who possess consideration. There is nothing in China, observes a well-informed writer, except magistracy and commonalty.* Wealth, according to the national maxims, is held in contempt, when compared to power and learning.† This would not probably prevent riches from obtaining their

* Le Comte, vol. ii. p. 52.
† Morrison's Chinese Miscellany, p. 43.

usual influence, were not their possession almost entirely confined to persons in office. Landed property is subdivided into extremely minute portions, and the soil is, in many cases, cultivated by the owner.* The mandarins while officially employed enjoy the means of living in splendour, but they can amass fortunes only by extortion, which is dangerous; by commerce, which is prohibited; or by accumulation, which is difficult, for they are obliged to live in pomp, and soon acquire a taste for luxurious indulgence.† The princes of the blood are maintained in state, and occupy a conspicuous place at audiences and processions. They have not, however, any great hold on the public mind; and the increase of their numbers, in consequence of the practice of polygamy, has greatly lowered their dignity. Those of the reigning family, after only five generations, amounted to two thousand.‡ A change of dynasty, hitherto by no means an unfrequent occurrence, at once sweeps away the whole. Great merchants, engaged either in foreign or domestic trade, are almost the only private individuals who acquire wealth, and live in splendour. According to Chinese ideas, however, they rank low in the social scale. As the mere dealers in commodities, they are held inferior to agriculturists, and even to the operatives or manufacturers.§ Their large fortunes, too, being divided among numerous families, who seldom inherit the frugal and industrious habits of their parents, are soon dissipated. It is a general remark in the country, that the most ample possessions seldom last beyond

* Mémoires, tome iv. p. 318. † Ibid. p. 314.
‡ Du Halde, vol. ii. p. 101.
§ Morrison's Chinese Miscellany, p. 43.

the third generation.* Wealth being thus held in low estimation, does not confer any degree of influence which can come into competition with that of government and its officers.

Amid this depression of all the other orders of society, the sovereign is revered with a depth of homage, of which there is no similar example, even in the servile courts of the East. He is described as the absolute lord, not only of China, but of the world; as the representative and vicegerent of Deity; as a potentate to whom is committed the entire rule in this lower sphere, and who accordingly centres in himself all earthly power and greatness. The vast extent of the empire, with the imperfect knowledge of other countries, favours such an illusion; and, even since this absurd notion has been in a great measure dispelled by means of European intercourse, attempts are still made to impress it upon the people. Embassies from the most remote nations are invited to the court of the emperor; but pains are taken to represent them as only bearing tribute, and rendering homage to the universal master of mankind. The testimonies of personal respect to the sovereign are, moreover, of that degrading kind, which are practised only under barbarous despotisms like those of Central Africa, and are disused in all countries that have made any approach to civilisation. We have repeatedly adverted to the ceremony of the ko-tou, in which, as is well known, every individual introduced to the monarch is required to throw himself nine times prostrate, striking his forehead as often against the ground. The adherence to ancient usage, which forms, as it were, the soul of the Chinese go-

* Mémoires, tome iv. pp. 318, 319.

vernment, seems to have precluded innovation upon customs, though no longer in harmony with the degree of intelligence which the nation has attained.

But, while the monarch is thus elevated above the rest of mankind, it cannot be alleged that "the enormous faith of many made for one" enters into the Chinese political creed. Their doctrine rather is that the one exists only for the many; and that, while he is believed to be invested by the Heavenly Ruler with the lofty character of his vicegerent on earth, it is solely on the condition of imitating his benignity, and diffusing his benefits over the world. Eminent sages have even pronounced that, by failing to discharge this obligation, he would forfeit his crown. Confucius, also, while he required from the people an almost slavish submission, exacted from the prince an entire devotion of time and labour to the duties of his office. Fortunately, too, the national maxims, while they exalt the sovereign to so lofty a height, do not ascribe to him any measure of infallibility; on the contrary, presuming that he may, and probably will, be guilty of great errors, the law has made provision that he shall be warned of his mistakes. A body of officers, holding the highest rank in the empire, and bearing the title of Tou-tché-yuen, or censors, are required to point out to him the faults with which they consider him chargeable; and this duty is enforced by making them responsible for every wrong which has been committed without remonstrance on their part.* It appears even, by a proclamation of Kien-long, to have been an established usage, that whenever an eclipse occurred, his constitutional advisers should

* Memoires, tome iv. p. 164.

submit to the emperor the mistakes in his conduct and government which were imagined to have given rise to that alarming phenomenon.*

Notwithstanding the illusory ground on which this practice was founded, it shows the anxiety felt by the ministers of state that the sentiments of the people and the lessons of wisdom should reach the ear of the monarch. It would indeed be chimerical to expect, that by these, or any other arrangements, an absolute prince could be secured from the influence of flattering courtiers; yet the Chinese annals record with pride many illustrious patriots who have braved danger, and even death itself, in a fearless performance of this duty. Several have brought their coffin and left it at the gate of the palace, to intimate their determination to abide whatever might be the issue of the advice which they came to give;† while others have expressed the same resolution in characters written with their blood. In short, from patriotism, from fear, and sometimes, perhaps, from mere pride, there have never been wanting, even to the worst emperors, counsellors who warned them of the danger of the course which they were pursuing.

Statesmen who wish to give salutary counsel may no doubt urge arguments to which judicious princes cannot be insensible. It is true, the overthrow of all feudal rights and dignities, and the absence of privileged bodies, remove from the sovereign many checks incident to a more popular form of government. But there remains behind a vast and imposing mass,—the people,—whose name sounds

* Mémoires, tome xiii. p. 479. † Ibid. tome viii. p. 242.

almost as terrible in this despotic empire as in the freest republics. Bound by no hereditary ties, they look to the emperor and his measures as the main source of their good or evil; and while they are taught to view him with the most profound reverence, they are instructed also to believe that it is his imperative duty to devote himself to their welfare. If he fails, they scarcely hesitate to consider his right to the throne as forfeited; and numerous insurrections are on record, by which the most powerful dynasties have been shaken or altogether subverted. As a penalty inseparable from his greatness, the sovereign is subjected to the hardship of being made responsible even for the natural evils with which the empire is visited. Not only does national suffering of itself usually generate discontent, but it is the general belief, especially among the lower classes, that famine, inundation, and pestilence, are judgments inflicted by Heaven for the offences of the prince. When, therefore, these calamities assail the empire, some signal delinquency on the part of its ruler is always inferred. He is considered, on such occasions, as called upon in a very particular manner to examine his conduct; and he studiously exhibits himself to his people in the character of an humbled penitent.* Ill-founded as the reproaches may be to which this belief exposes the monarch, the effect in many instances may be salutary. A prince endued with any degree of prudence endeavours to stand well with the great body of the people, especially the agricultural classes; and to oppress them is the offence which is least readily forgiven in a mandarin.†

* Du Halde, vol. ii. pp 17, 18. Grosier, tome xi. p. 502-504.
† Mémoires, tome iv. p. 318.

These causes, on the whole, seem to counteract, to a great extent, the temptations incident to princes who sit on so splendid a throne. A few, no doubt, especially in the earlier dynasties, are branded with ignominy, like the worst of the Cæsars; but a considerable proportion have been distinguished by talents and virtues above the ordinary class of sovereigns. The least esteemed in modern times have been rather weak than positively wicked and oppressive.

The peculiar advantages of the Chinese government are mainly connected with its arrangements for securing intelligent functionaries in the different branches of administration. These are all carried on by a class to whom Europeans, with very little propriety, apply the Portuguese term mandarin, but this expression is now so fully established, that we shall not attempt to substitute for it the native appellation of *quan*. They are, according to the principle of the constitution, raised to that dignity by proficiency in learning, ascertained by a minute and careful examination. It is not a little surprising at the same time that, though letters be made the principal qualification for the exercise of power, no seminaries are maintained by the state, except a few schools for the soldiery. All other students are left to find for themselves the means of tuition. Instructors, however, in consequence of the demand for their services, are abundant; and though their incomes be small, they are held in great respect. The degrees of learning are *sieou-tsai*, *kiu-gin*, and *tsin-tsee*, which have been translated by the words bachelor, licentiate, and doctor; but there is no exact correspondence between the two classes of honours. All the candidates for literary distinction

in a *hien*, or smaller city with the district attached to it, must undergo an examination by the *che-hien*, or governor, who selects only a certain number of the best qualified. These must pass through a farther scrutiny by the *che-fou*, or governor of the great city and territory, in which this smaller one is comprehended. He also chooses only a certain number, who are called *tong-seng*, or probationers. These have not yet attained degrees, which are conferred only by a great officer named *hio-tao*, who, once in three years, makes a circuit from Pe-king through the provinces. On his arrival in any of the principal cities, the examinations presently commence, and are conducted in spacious edifices, with considerable attention to form. A great part of these structures, however, is laid out in little closets, $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet long by $3\frac{1}{2}$ broad, in which the candidates perform their exercises on a prescribed subject, without any material whatever, except pencils, ink, and paper. The hio-tao inspects these productions, and selects perhaps fifteen individuals out of about four hundred, who are invested with the title of sieou-tsai, in sign of which they are allowed to wear a blue gown with a black border, and a cap surmounted by a silver bird. Another triennial examination takes place in the capital of each province for the degree of kiu-gin, under the superintendence of two *han-lin*, or doctors of the very highest class, attended by a number of assistants. From the large body of sieou-tsai, not more, it is said, than sixty in ten thousand are raised to this dignity; who may now have their cap surmounted by a golden bird, and are eligible to the highest offices, even to that of viceroy. There remains, however, a still

more elevated grade, that of tsin-tsee, called by us doctor, the candidates for which must resort to Peking, where the exercises are named, and the merit determined by the emperor himself. Out of five or six thousand, only three hundred, and sometimes fewer, are selected for this lofty station, which renders them the greatest men in the empire.

Such is the progression by which individuals rise to be mandarins of letters, qualified to fill the civil departments of the state. Those who are to hold military commands, pass through a similar graduation; but, instead of history and morals, they are examined upon their skill in drawing the bow, and dexterity in wielding other warlike weapons. A few works on the military art form their only intellectual exercise.

The candidates, though fully accomplished, do not at once become mandarins. They must wait till a vacancy occurs, when, according to due course, the four senior names are taken, and it is decided by lot who shall succeed. It appears, however, that, under the present dynasty, the very irregular practice of selling offices has prevailed, and, on some occasions, been carried to a great extent. A strong remonstrance was presented by the Ly-pou board to Kea-king, the late emperor, on the injury thus sustained by the public service, and the hardship endured by the literary graduates. It was stated that there were upwards of 5000 of the first rank (tsin-tsee), and 27,000 of the second (kiu-gin), who had not obtained employment, and who could not hope to reach it till a very advanced period of life. It was suggested, that a moderate reduction in the expenses of the palace might afford funds suffi-

cient to relieve the state from this degrading necessity.*

The highest station that can be filled by the mandarins is a place at the tribunals, or more properly boards, called *pous*, the individuals forming which reside constantly in the capital, and act at once as councillors, secretaries, and ministers to the sovereign.† Almost the whole routine of administration is carried on according to their suggestions. Upon any difficulty occurring, or any representation being made to the emperor, it is referred to their decision, when, having formed an opinion, they draw up an edict in conformity with it, which they present to him for his signature. The monarch reserves the right of forming a judgment for himself, and the *pous*, on some occasions, have been obliged to prepare a decree in direct contradiction to that dictated by their own views. In all common cases, however, the sign-manual follows as a matter of course.

These functionaries are divided into six great boards, to whom the different branches of administration are intrusted. 1*st*, The Ly-pou, who superintend the appointment of mandarins for the official stations in the provinces, and also examine and report upon their conduct, recommending the promotion of some, and the degradation of others. 2*d*, The Hou-pou, or court of finance, to whom are intrusted the receipt and expenditure of the public revenue, and whose functions are the more complicated, as a great part of the tributes are remitted, and pay-

* Du Halde, vol. iii. p. 6-13. Morrison's Dictionary, vol. i. p. 759, &c. Appendix to Thoms' Chinese Courtship (Macao, 1824), p. 331-333.

† Memoires, tome iv. p. 304.

ments made, in rice, silk, salt, wood, and other commodities. *3d*, The Li-pou (which must be distinguished from Ly-pou), or board of rites, to whom are confided various objects of great as well as of minor importance, which, according to the peculiar ideas of the Chinese, rank almost on a level, —public worship,—the arts and sciences,—titles of honour,—the dresses to be worn by officers of state, —and, finally, the manner in which the imperial table is to be furnished. *4th*, The Ping-pou, or board of arms, having the superintendence of the troops, fortresses, arsenals, supplies, and every thing connected with the military establishment. *5th*, The Hing-pou, or board of criminal justice, whose power extends to cognizance of all offences committed within the kingdom. *6th*, The Kong-pou, or board of works, whose concern is the maintaining and keeping in repair of all structures, whether useful or ornamental, throughout the empire,—including canals, roads, bridges, palaces, with the boats and other shipping employed in the imperial service.

Each of these boards has several subordinate departments, among which its duties are distributed. Those of finance and justice have respectively fourteen, corresponding to the original provinces of the empire; the others have only four, making the whole number forty-four. Each being composed of two presidents and twenty-four councillors, the members amount to very nearly twelve hundred, without including clerks, messengers, and other inferior officers.*

Besides these principal boards, there are others resident in the capital, of which the most important

* Du Halde, vol. ii. p. 34-38. Mémoires, tome iv. p. 135-164.

are the censors, a peculiar body, to whom, so far as we are aware, nothing similar has existed, unless in republican Rome, where they exercised comparatively very limited functions. They consist of mandarins of the first order, who, on reaching this station, can expect nothing higher, and have therefore no motive to bias their conduct. They may be described as a kind of privileged spies, whose duty it is to denounce every thing done amiss by the viceroys, the boards, and even by the emperor himself. They stand, according to Chinese phraseology, between heaven and the prince, between the prince and the mandarins, between the mandarins and the people. They are bound to defend truth, innocence, and justice, as well as to guard against treachery, negligence, and innovation. On them especially devolves the dangerous task of unfolding to the monarch himself the errors of his conduct, and calling upon him to amend; and, as already observed, examples are recorded of this duty having been fulfilled with the most intrepid fidelity.* They have access to all the deliberations of the boards, and either visit the provinces in person, or send deputies to observe the conduct of the several governors. They do not, however, possess summary power. On a charge being advanced by them against any individual or body of men, it is referred to the proper tribunal, whose decision is still subject to the review of the emperor. Yet the boards, awed by the great influence of the censors, are said seldom to venture on a dissent from their opinion. On the whole, their power seems somewhat exorbitant; though, so far from being generally abused,

* Memoires, tome iv. p. 164, &c. Du Halde, vol. ii. p. 38.40.

it is said to be exercised in an honest and salutary manner.

Another body, composed of the most learned doctors, forms the Han-lin college,* who are intrusted with the literary concerns of the empire. To them is committed the instruction of the heir-apparent and the other princes in the history of their country, the lessons of its sages, and the principles of morals and political jurisprudence. One part of their task, as formerly mentioned, is to keep a record of passing events, to which they afterwards give an historical form. Another of their duties respects the purity of the national language, and the rules of composition. Voluminous works on these interesting subjects are compiled by the Han-lin doctors, which are printed and circulated at the expense of the state.

It appears evident that these *pous*, or boards, give to the Chinese constitution its peculiar character, and produce that measure of good government, which has been maintained among so many revolutions. To them particularly is owing that singular stability which marks all public institutions. The sovereign, though his interest may be opposed to innovation, is not usually much affected by remote dangers, and amid the routine of daily cares might be readily attracted by any striking novelty. As a proof of this, all the foreign religions and domestic heresies which have appeared in the country, have been favoured by different emperors. But the boards have invariably regarded them with relentless hostility, not fearing to encounter the hazard of imperial displeasure by earnest and re-

* Mémoires, tome viii. p. 250. Du Halde, vol. ii. pp. 41, 42.

peated demands for their suppression; and though unable to prevail in the first instance, their perseverance has usually in the end obtained the proscription of the obnoxious faction. They constitute, in fact, an aristocratic body, raised by peculiar privileges above the rest of their countrymen; and though their rank is in no degree hereditary, yet, among such a favoured class, there is soon formed an *esprit de corps* hostile to every innovation which would endanger its place in society. This numerous and somewhat enlightened body possess great influence on public opinion, which acts with considerable power both upon the court and the people.

The actual administration, in consequence of the extent of the empire, must be chiefly in the hands of the viceroys, many of whom are intrusted with territories both larger and more populous than a European kingdom. According to the usual principle of despotic governments, they exercise within their respective spheres the same absolute authority which is possessed by the emperor over the whole. They maintain, on a smaller scale, a court alike splendid; travel with a retinue equally pompous; and represent in every respect the majesty of the supreme ruler. Their processions are arranged so as to inspire, by somewhat rude means, respect and terror. They are accompanied with the sound of gongs; numerous flags display their titles in golden letters, and the symbols of office; while there follows an array of canes, whips, chains, and instruments of torture, ready to be applied to offenders.* During the feudal times of China, the intrigues of provincial rulers kept the empire in a state of

* Du Halde, vol. ii. pp. 47, 48.

perpetual agitation; but the strictest arrangements have now been adopted to render these officers as subservient as the meanest subject. Every trace of those hereditary jurisdictions, which survive in the most absolute of the other Asiatic empires, has in China been completely obliterated. The mandarin is appointed in the manner already stated, professedly on the sole ground of merit, though, doubtless, not without some mixture of personal favour. He is usually sent to a distant province; and although his power is in the first instance unlimited, every imaginable care is taken to deter from its abuse. Once in three years a report is made by him to the Ly-pou Board, relative to his subordinate officers; and he is, at the same time, required to transmit a complete list of the faults committed by himself during that period. This task he might be suspected of performing in a very lenient manner; but he knows that a similar account is preparing in less partial quarters, and the discovery of any omission would convert a venial offence into one of a deep dye.* He is also held in awe by the dread of imperial visiters, who from time to time arrive unexpectedly from the capital to investigate the state of affairs. On such occasions the punishment is equally prompt and effective. A mandarin of the first order has been seen to enter the palace in all the pomp of his high office, and to come out loaded with chains, to be tried for his life before the tribunals.† Le Comte saw one who, after filling the most exalted station, was reduced so low as to stand sentinel at the palace-gate. Even

* Mémoires, tome iv. pp. 132, 133. † Ibid. tome iv. p. 327.

the cane is frequently applied to unworthy magistrates, who have so little sense of personal dignity, that the bodily pain is supposed to constitute their chief suffering. An officer of state, it has been remarked, stretched along the ground to be flogged by another not much his superior in rank, and then kissing the rod, presents to European eyes a most humiliating spectacle.* Even in designating themselves, they are obliged to annex to their present rank the expressions, "raised from such a situation," or, in a contrary case, "degraded from such a situation."† The imperial court, as well as those of the viceroys and governors, are open to complaints respecting the conduct of the inferior departments. There is even placed at the palace-gate a certain drum, on which whoever beats must be forthwith admitted to an audience, though severe penalties would be incurred were such a proceeding adopted on any but very momentous occasions.‡ After all these precautions, Mr Barrow seems convinced that individuals suspected of possessing any considerable wealth are exposed to great oppression;|| and the scarcity of capital in a country so improved, with the absence of a middling class and a monied interest, seem to indicate that this suspicion is but too well founded. Yet the great body of the landed proprietors and cultivators are protected by the indigence consequent on the very minute subdivision of this description of property; so that no considerable sum could be levied from them, unless by extortion practised upon so large a num-

* Barrow's Travels, p. 382. † Du Halde, vol. ii. p. 65.
‡ Du Halde, vol. ii. p. 53. Davis' Fortunate Union, vol. i. p. 248.
|| Barrow's Travels, pp. 389, 390.

ber as would excite that general discontent which the government peculiarly dreads.

The administration of the empire is necessarily modified by its present situation, as subject to a foreign, and what it deems a barbarous yoke. This cannot but be felt by a people so deeply imbued with national pride; yet, among all who are not employed under government, there is a devotedness to private interests, and an absence of public spirit, which render the yoke by no means so galling as it would be to a European community. The Mantchoo princes, besides, who entered China as friends, have studiously preserved its laws and institutions, and adopted every mode of conciliation consistent with the maintenance of their own supremacy. With this view the great boards have been composed of an equal number of Tartars and Chinese; and though the prime-ministers, and those persons most in the sovereign's confidence, are naturally selected from the former nation, the provincial commands, even of the highest rank, are amply shared by the latter. Mr Barrow received, indeed, the impression that in all departments the preference of Tartars was becoming more and more decided.* But this was founded perhaps on observations made in the immediate precincts of the court; or, if the grievance then existed, it seems to have been since redressed. The Chinese Repository for November 1833 gives the following precise statement upon this subject:—Of the sixteen ministers of state, there were nine Chinese; of the thirty-six presidents of tribunals (boards), eighteen; of the eight governors (orviceroys), six; of the fifteen lieutenant-governors,

* Travels, p. 413.

Chinese Punishment.

ten. In the other high official stations throughout the empire, the natives were in the proportion of 102 to 73, and therefore they seem to have no reasonable ground to complain.

The penal code of China* is not sanguinary, though it is enforced by means to which we cannot forbear attaching peculiar degradation. The bamboo, inflicted on the offender with his face laid flat on the ground, is the main instrument with which, throughout this vast empire, criminal justice is executed. The law determines the length, thickness, and weight of the cane with which a culprit is to be chastised. The amount of blows varies from 10 to 100; but there is an understanding that only four in ten of the decreed number shall be actually

* Staunton, Ta-tsing-leu-lee. Barrow, in Supplement to Encyclopædia Britannica, vol. iii. p. 75-78.

struck. If the offence be very serious, there is added to the sentence of 100 blows that of banishment, either for a limited period to the distance of 150 miles, or for life to the distance of 700 or 1000 miles. When the crime is considered capital, death by strangulation is the mildest form; that by beheading, contrary to our ideas, implies additional ignominy. The cutting of the body into ten thousand pieces, formerly pronounced in cases deemed peculiarly heinous, is now disused as barbarous.

The crimes that incur the penalty of death are primarily those denominated the ten treasons, which, besides attempts to resist or subvert the government, include parricide, massacre (extending to three in a family), want of piety towards parents, and the sowing of discord among relatives. Any one who steals to the value of more than 120 taels (£40) suffers death. This sentence, however, cannot be pronounced, unless by warrant from the emperor, after report from the proper board. Exceptions are only made in cases of treason or insurrection. On such occasions, if not extremely inconvenient, the offender is sent to Pe-king. The number condemned to death, in 1784, was 1348.

For minor offences against the person, the punishment is severe, but dealt out with peculiar nicety. If one individual strikes another with the hand or foot, the smallest penalty is twenty blows; and if there has been any wound, if the part swells or is inflamed, it is thirty. If the assault has been made with a cudgel, the law dooms forty blows. If blood appears, not from the broken skin only but from internal injury, eighty blows. If more than an inch of hair be abstracted, fifty blows.

Throwing filth on the head or face, eighty blows; breaking a tooth, a toe, or a finger, wounding with copper or iron needles, all incur 100 blows. Some singular provisions are found in this code. If a physician designedly causes the death of his patient, he justly suffers death; but if this event has occurred even through want of skill, ascertained by an examination of other physicians, he is precluded from ever after practising. If he aggravates the disease, with the view of obtaining more money, the sum so received is considered as stolen, and he is punished as a thief. If any one, without permission, enters the imperial palace, he suffers 100 blows; if he shoots towards it, he undergoes death. If any one seizes and sells another, he incurs 100 blows and perpetual banishment. He who does not register any member of his family or household, 100 blows. Extorting money by false pretences is equal to theft; if by threats, the penalty is more severe. Causing suicide by intimidation incurs 100 blows; and if it was used with the view of urging to an unlawful object, it is visited with death.

Commutation of punishment for money is admitted, professedly in consideration of some palliating circumstances; but too probably, where funds are known to exist, this mode of expiation will be viewed with partiality by the government. The price is regulated by the rank of the guilty individual. For death it varies from 12,000 to 1200 taels; for perpetual banishment, 7200 to 720 taels; for three years' banishment, 4800 to 480. The barbarous system of extracting evidence or confession by torture is practised with severity. Exemption is granted only to persons under fifteen and above seventy

years of age, and to certain privileged classes, whose immunity being founded upon rank does not improve the equity of the arrangement. The prisons, however, are tolerably well regulated. An entire separation of the sexes is dictated by the manners of the people. During the day the inmates are allowed to enjoy the open air, and have a spacious temple for worship; but at night they are all confined in a large hall, where they have scarcely space to lie down; and the dungeon for the lower order of criminals forms a still more gloomy retreat.* To the list of minor punishments we may add two species of moving prisons,—the cangue, a board of wood, weighing thirty-three pounds, which is borne on the shoulders, with an opening for the head; and the iron chain, of about seven pounds weight, fastened to the legs. This the culprit, during a period proportioned to his offence, is condemned to wear constantly, and drag with him wherever he goes.

The revenue of the Chinese empire is an important subject, respecting which there exist pretty copious statements; but though these appear to be derived from high authority, they exhibit so many discrepancies that the subject remains involved in some uncertainty. We shall lay before our readers such facts as we have been able to collect, and then attempt, as far as possible, to reconcile them, so as to arrive at a probable result. Two circumstances may be premised, which tend to perplex the accounts; the taxes are paid partly in money and partly in kind; and of those levied in each province, one portion remains to defray its local expenditure, while the surplus only is remitted to the imperial treasury.

* Churchill's Voyages, vol. i. pp. 15, 16.

Du Halde considers that the payment in money is confined to the capitation-impost, of the amount of which, however, he does not give any particular estimate. It has since been converted into a land-tax, respecting which other authors give information which may probably be relied on. The Frenchman details the taxes paid in kind as amounting to 40,155,490 sacks (120 pounds each) of rice, wheat, and millet; 1,315,937 loaves (50 pounds each) of salt; 210,470 sacks of beans; and 22,598,597 bundles of straw; 190,530 pounds of wrought, and 409,896 pounds of unwrought silk; 396,480 pieces calico; 560,280 pieces linen cloth. He adds, generally, vast quantities of velvet, satin, damask, and other stuffs; also oxen, sheep, hogs, geese, ducks, wild-fowl, fish, herbs, fruits, spices, varnish, and various sorts of wine (more properly beer and spirits, as there is no real wine made in China). The value of the whole he estimates at 200 millions of taels.* The tael is valued by the East India Company at 6s. 8d.,† or one-third of a pound sterling. This sum, therefore, will amount to somewhat above sixty-six millions of our money.

Amiot gives details of the revenue derived from each province, producing on the whole the amount of 6,406,356 taels from customs, duties, and the monopoly of salt, and 34,000,000 from the land-tax; in all, 40,406,356 taels, or about £13,500,000.‡ There is every reason to think that this statement was derived from good sources; but it evidently relates only to the amount remitted in money to the

* Du Halde, vol. ii. p. 21.
† M'Culloch's Dictionary of Commerce, 2d ed. p. 232.
‡ Mémoires, tome vi. p. 304.

imperial treasury, leaving out the provincial expenditure and the taxes in kind.

To the gentlemen of Lord Macartney's embassy, the entire produce of the revenue was stated by Chow-ta-zhin, the intelligent mandarin who accompanied them, at 200,000,000 taels, or £66,000,000 sterling; thus according exactly with the information received by Du Halde. The net remittance to Pe-king was given at 36,000,000 taels, or £12,000,000. The expenses of the civil government were said to be £1,973,333.*

The most recent intelligence on this subject is that which Mr Thoms, by a somewhat singular combination, has appended to his translation of a poem on Chinese courtship. It was supplied by a tsin-tsee, or graduate of the first class, in the province of Quang-see, and was found to coincide with the facts contained in an official publication nearly resembling our Royal Calendar. It may be questioned whether the mandarin did not draw his information from the same source, making the two authorities identical; however, the last seems a good one, and Mr Thoms' scholarship assures us that the statement is correctly translated. He gives the amount of taxes remitted to Pe-king at 33,327,056 taels (£11,109,000). There is also sent to the capital 4,230,959 *shihs* (180 pounds each) of rice and other grain. The whole of the Chinese revenue is thus specified:—

	Taels.
Remitted to the capital in money,	33,327,056
In rice and other grain, value	6,316,433
Spent in the provinces in money,	6,969,771
In grain, value	20,144,931
In rice, value	7,673,437
	74,431,633

Nearly £25,000,000 sterling.

* Barrow's Travels, p. 402-404.

The expenditure on the civil-list is stated at 3,623,730 taels in money; that on the army, 20,884,203 taels. The pay of a Tartar general is, in money, 81 taels; firewood, 144; vegetables, candles, coals, 180; stationary, 200. That of a subordinate officer, under the same heads, is 18, 48, 12, 12 taels respectively.

In these different statements there is a very close approximation as to the amount of pecuniary remittances to the imperial treasury. The lowest exceeds eleven millions,—the highest is not much above thirteen. Should Mr Thoms' authority have overlooked the customs and salt, he would agree almost exactly with Amiot, whose report, as to the payment on the land-tax, scarcely at all differs from that given by the other as the whole amount. At all events, we seem justified, by a concurrence of authorities, in concluding that the amount annually paid into the imperial treasury does not much exceed or fall short of £12,000,000 sterling.

In regard to the total value of the imposts, including those received in kind, it is impossible not to be struck with the exact coincidence between the information obtained by Du Halde and that given to the English embassy. It is, indeed, rather too complete; so that the details, though distinct, may be suspected to have been drawn from some common source. But the report of Mr Thoms is widely different indeed, since the others make it sixty-six millions, and he rates it at only twenty-five. Our means of deciding between two such authorities are somewhat deficient; yet, while we admit that the Chinese may have been guilty of exaggeration, we see ground to suspect that, in his list, many parti-

culars of great importance have been overlooked. The French writer, as above observed, describes the tributes in kind to consist, not of grain merely, but of every product of nature and art, throughout the empire. Such levies were once certainly made, and have not probably been discontinued. In fact, even according to Mr Thoms, the payments in kind made to the officers include numerous articles besides grain. It seems more consonant to Chinese policy to suppose them procured in the manner stated by Du Halde, than purchased with money; indeed every doubt on this subject is removed by the provisions in the penal code respecting manufacturers, who are required to deliver to government a portion of their fabrics, whether in silk, piece-goods, or the precious metals.* It may be observed, in the outline given by Mr Thoms himself, that the proportion paid to the officers in money is very small, not exceeding a fifth. If we suppose the same rule to obtain, in regard to the whole revenue, the sum mentioned by him of £13,000,000, multiplied by five, will give £65,000,000,—a singularly close approximation to the estimates of Du Halde and Staunton. It is true that most of the troops have the deficiency of money-pay made up by the assignment of a spot of land. These lands, however, amounting, according to Amiot, to upwards of twenty-one millions of acres,† form evidently part of the domain of the crown, the rent of which is paid in military service, and they seem justly included among the fiscal resources of the empire. If, then, to the £25,000,000 of Mr Thoms, we add the esti-

* Staunton's Ta-tsing-leu-lee, p. 127-131.
† Memoires, tome ii. p. 404.

mated annual value of these lands, with that of the other tributes paid in kind, the discrepancy between him and the other authorities will become by no means so wide as at first appeared.

The amount of the military force which defends this immense empire, and holds in vassalage many of the neighbouring powers, has, like the revenue, been very differently stated.

Du Halde, seemingly on credible grounds, rates the number of men at about 700,000, who are commanded by 18,000 mandarins. It is remarkable that this is the lowest estimate named by any writer, and therefore it is perhaps the most probable. He adds that 565,000 horses are constantly kept for mounting the cavalry.

Van-ta-zhin, the military mandarin who accompanied Lord Macartney, reckoned the Chinese force at 1,000,000 of infantry and 800,000 cavalry. The embassy considered this as agreeing pretty well with their own observations as to the foot, but if there was such a great body of horsemen, they must have been stationed on the frontier or in Tartary. They believe the statement to have been made with candour, though not with the same care as that given by the civil mandarin; but we have no doubt of its being much exaggerated. These troops are said to be divided into five classes:—Tartar cavalry armed with the sabre; Tartar infantry armed with the bow; Chinese infantry armed with bows; the same infantry armed with matchlocks; lastly, tigers of war, who bear before them shields painted with strange and grotesque figures, with the view of terrifying the enemy.*

* Barrow's Travels, p. 408-409. Staunton, vol. iii. pp. 392, 393.

Timkowski, in his Travels to Pe-king, gives the following numbers as derived from good authority:—

Mantchoos,	67,800
Mongols,	21,100
Chinese united to Mantchoos at the conquest,	27,000
Ordinary Chinese troops,	500,000
Militia and Irregulars,	125,000
	740,900*

The near coincidence of this list with that of Du Halde tends to corroborate both.

Mr Thoms, in the work already quoted, and on the same authorities, gives a detailed account of the Chinese army and its distribution, according to which, there are 822,000 infantry, 410,000 cavalry, and 31,000 seamen. In such a work, however, as the Royal Calendar, there may be suspected a disposition to represent in the strongest light the power of the empire. Every corps would be given at its full complement,—a state in which an establishment is scarcely ever maintained. For instance, the naval force of Quang-tung and Fo-kien, stationed under the admiral at Nan-tsee, is estimated by the narrator of the Amherst's voyage, who certainly had good opportunities of observation, and the precision of whose numbers affords a presumption in their favour, at 5237, being 4078 for the former province and 1159 for the latter. But according to Mr Thoms, there are 7000 for the one and 3000 for the other,—in all 10,000. Were the whole reduced in the same proportion, his numbers would be brought fully down to those of Du Halde

* Journey, vol. ii. p. 17.

and Timkowski, which seem every way to bear the most authentic character.

The Chinese have a very low reputation as soldiers; and it has even been confidently asserted, that they are naturally poltroons. Such a conclusion, we suspect, has been formed on very hasty grounds; and it cannot be assented to by any one who has perused with attention even the outline which we have given of their history. While the empire was in its feudal state, divided among a number of chieftains almost independent, intestine war raged for many ages without intermission. Even after all those great feudatories had been crushed, there remained among the people a remarkable promptitude to have recourse to arms in insurrectionary movements, which often became formidable. We have seen, too, that at an early period Chinese troops in regular battle uniformly beat their Tartar invaders. The empire, no doubt, was several times partially, and twice completely conquered by these hordes; but those successes were obtained when the government was weak, or while it was distracted by treachery and disunion in the provinces. The first general conquest was by Zingis and his posterity, the most powerful of all the Asiatic dynasties. They succeeded, however, only after long resistance, and were speedily driven out by the native armies. The Mantchoos, who next completely subdued, and still possess the country, were invited by a great body of the people to save them from internal calamities. They were thus in some measure an object of choice; and they have maintained their dominion by a singularly able, cautious, and conciliatory administration.

The reigning dynasty have kept up the Chinese

army to the full amount of its vast complement; but, at the same time, they maintain it on a footing which, though not unacceptable to the troops, effectually precludes their attaining any high military character. Many of them perform the duty of guards at the principal stations along the canals, rivers, and at the gates of cities, where their chief occupation is to do honour to distinguished strangers. When the approach of a great man is announced, they hasten to put on their satin boots and quilted petticoats, and receive him according to established etiquette. Others are employed in the towns as police-officers, where the little resistance they encounter cannot inure them to any exercise of prowess.* But the greater number are located on little pieces of ground, from the produce of which, in addition to a small pay, they draw their subsistence. In the instructions of the Emperor Yong-tching, they are especially exhorted to apply with diligence to agriculture; and as from that occupation alone they can expect to derive wealth, it will probably attract their chief exertions. It is true they are also commanded to make themselves expert in the use of military weapons, their proficiency in which is, from time to time, ascertained by a mandarin, who, if any striking deficiency appear, has recourse to the bamboo.† But, though the dread of this visit may induce the soldier to withdraw from the pursuits of industry such a portion of time as shall enable him to escape punishment, he is never likely, under such training, to acquire much of a

* Barrow's Travels, pp. 408, 409.
† Mémoires, tome vii. p. 27-31.

professional character. He must always be more a farmer than a soldier.

The force stationed near the capital, along the frontier, and in the conquered countries, is probably of a different and more martial description. It consists chiefly of Tartars,—a people of warlike habits, and whom the present government seeks, of course, to render as effective as possible.* Every individual of this nation is at his birth enrolled as a soldier. He receives high pay and occasional donations, and follows, it is probable, no other profession besides that of arms. At the first conquest, a considerable extent of forfeited land was divided among their banners, but they never applied seriously to agriculture, and soon began to value their allotments only according to the price at which they could be sold. This transfer was not, indeed, allowed, except to their own people, and even to those of the same tribe; yet the wily Chinese soon contrived, under fictitious titles, to buy up a large proportion.† The whole of the Tartars, therefore, with the limited number of natives joined to them, may be considered as the standing army. They have, indeed, only partially adopted the improved arms and discipline which have given such a superiority to European troops. Their artillery is scanty and in bad condition; the bow and the sabre, as in the days of Zingis, being still the favourite weapons. The science of war must be in a very low state, if, as Mr Ellis asserts, bodily strength and courage be still accounted the chief requisites in a commander. Yet, the impression that China is wholly inefficient as a military power, appears to have been too hastily admitted by travellers passing

* Barrow's Travels, p. 412. † Mémoires, tome vii. p. 27.

through the interior, who saw only the more unwarlike detachments stationed on the public roads and canals. The present state and recent history of this empire seem to warrant a different conclusion. She has subdued, and still holds in subjection, the warlike tribes of Mongolia and Bucharia, from whom have sprung the most celebrated of the Asiatic conquerors. Her forces in the Thibet war vanquished the Nepaulese, generally considered the bravest nation in Hindostan. There seems little doubt, therefore, that the empire contains troops of a more formidable character than those which, on occasions of ceremony, appear on parade in the presence of the foreign embassies.

CHAPTER IV.

National Industry.

The Chinese an industrious People—Their early Inventions—Pre-eminence attached to Agriculture—Festivals in its Honour—Its gradual Progress—Extent and Distribution of Lands—Mode of Cultivation—Scarcity of Domestic Animals—Contrivances for procuring Manure—Terrace-culture—Irrigation—Imperfect Drainage—Objects of Culture—Species of Grain—Frequent Famines—Silkworms—Cotton—Dyeing Stuffs—Varnish—Tea—Sugar—Tobacco—Bamboo—Tallow-tree—Camphor—Metals and Minerals—Manufactures—Silk—Cotton—Porcelain—Working in Metals—Lanterns—Toys—Dexterous Handiwork—Commerce—Ample Materials—Limitation of Foreign Intercourse—Coasting-trade—Navigable Canals—Roads—Bridges—Shipping—Navigation—Fishing—Numbers living on the Water—Interest of Money—Currency.

The Chinese hold a distinguished place as an industrious people, having, from an early period, made considerable progress in the useful arts. This term we apply in the common acceptation, which, with no very strict propriety, confines its import to those that minister to the external accommodation and physical well-being of man. In the course of a few centuries, the enterprise of Europe has raised the skill of artificers to a height surpassing whatever has been achieved in any other age or country; but prior to that date, the Chinese undoubtedly ranked, in point of mechanical ingenuity, above the most celebrated nations of the Western World. The Greeks

earned a loftier name by their wise systems of polity, and by the perfection to which they carried those sublime pursuits which develop the nobler faculties of man; while in agriculture, manufactures, and all the processes connected with them, they stood very low when compared with this oriental people. Among them, as has been already observed, several of the discoveries which have been considered as throwing the greatest lustre on modern invention, were for many ages familiar; nor is it improbable that a vague intelligence, brought by expeditions from the East, may have prompted to similar acquirements in Europe. Generally speaking, however, although the methods employed bear that resemblance which may be expected when the same materials are used for a like purpose, there are remarkable differences, showing that the two races did not derive their improvements from each other, nor even from any common source, but that they were the result of entirely distinct exertions of human genius.*

Among the branches of industry, agriculture, according to the laws and maxims of the empire, still retains all its original pre-eminence; nor have manufactures and commerce yet reached that prominent place which they merit, and have long occupied in Europe. Among the several grades of society, the cultivators of mind rank first; those of land are placed next; and the third station is assigned to manufacturers; while the exchangers of commodities or merchants rank lowest of all.† The

* Staunton vol. iii. p. 104-106.
† Morrison's Chinese Miscellany, p. 43.

peasantry in an especial sense constitute the people, by whom even the supreme authority is overawed, and whom it studiously seeks to sooth and conciliate. The two other classes have, however, shown equal industry and ingenuity in their respective departments; but it is not to be concealed that they have risen to eminence by their own exertions, and amid general neglect and discouragement on the part of the government.

A deep veneration for agriculture is inscribed on all the institutions of China. The deeds which immortalized the early sovereigns, and particularly Yao and Chun, were the great works which they projected for clearing and cultivating the ground.* A homage to this primary art, altogether peculiar to the Chinese, is still seen in the annual celebration, by which the emperor makes a show of performing its operations. This ceremony, which originated more than 2000 years ago, had been discontinued by degenerate princes, but was revived by Yong-tching, the third of the Mantchoo dynasty, whom we have commemorated as a zealous restorer of ancient usages. This anniversary takes place on the twenty-fourth day of the second moon, coinciding with our month of February. The monarch prepares himself for it by fasting three days; he then repairs to the appointed spot with three princes, nine presidents of the high tribunals, forty old and forty young husbandmen. Having performed a preliminary sacrifice of the fruits of the earth to Shang-ti, the supreme deity, he takes in his hand the plough, and makes a furrow of some length, in which he is

* Mémoires, tome i. pp. 90, 217.

followed by the princes and other grandees. A similar course is observed in sowing the field; and the operations are completed by the husbandmen.* An annual festival is also celebrated in the capital of each province. The governor marches forth, crowned with flowers, and accompanied by a numerous train, bearing flags, adorned with agricultural emblems and portraits of eminent husbandmen, while the streets are decorated with lanterns and triumphal arches. Among other figures is a porcelain cow of enormous magnitude, carried by forty men, and attended by a boy, who represents the genius of industry; at the close of the procession the animal is opened, and found to contain numerous smaller cows of the same material, which are distributed among the people.

The ancient descriptions of China exhibit nothing of that sedulous cultivation which now covers the empire. In the age preceding Fou-hi, as we have seen, the soil was overspread by one vast forest, and the people derived their subsistence solely from the spontaneous fruits of the earth and the flesh of animals killed in hunting. Even under the Tcheou dynasty, when the country was divided into numerous principalities, each was portioned out into three sections, in a manner still to be observed in the ruder tracts of Africa. A limited extent around the capital was under regular culture; a wide circuit beyond was devoted to pasturage; while on every side an extensive thicket formed the boundary of the state. This wooded tract was the haunt of wild animals, which became the terror and scourge

* Du Halde, vol. ii. pp. 120, 121.

of the pastoral regions. To reduce their numbers, for their extirpation could not be contemplated, an armed body proceeded every spring, with the prince at their head, to make war against them in their own retreats. Only a single road led through this savage woodland, from the capital of one state to that of another.* The steps by which China passed from this rude condition to its present improvement are not very distinctly marked. The reign of Chi-hoang-ti, whose iron sway crushed all feudal pretensions, is lamented as the era when land became an object of private property, and when the domains, which had formerly belonged to the public, were parcelled out among the chiefs who had aided in raising his dynasty to the throne.† Yet this change, though no doubt attended with individual hardship, was probably the result of improving culture, and essential to its farther progress. Under the illustrious family of Han, which immediately succeeded, agriculture advanced very rapidly towards its present flourishing state. Ouen-ti, an early monarch of that race, bestowed particular attention on this important art, and is also said to have instituted the imperial festival celebrated in its honour.‡ By this time, it had struck such deep root, that foreign conquest and civil commotion, though they produced much calamity, never caused any permanent check. During the two last centuries, under the Mantchoo dynasty, the empire has been preserved in such profound peace, and ruled in a manner so just and beneficent, that all the

* Mémoires, tome i. pp. 166, 167. † Ibid. tome ii. p. 396.
‡ Ibid. p. 397.

branches of industry have been more prosperous than at any preceding era.

The entire extent of the cultivated lands is stated by Amiot, from an official work, at very nearly 736 ouan, or about 596 millions of English acres. These are said to be distributed as follows:—

	Acres.
Lands of the people,	573,627,700
Military lands,	21,014,900
Divided among the Tartar banners,	1,121,000
Attached to Miaos and Pagodas,	293,200
Belonging to Literati,	115,700
	596,172,500*

Agriculture, though pursued with exemplary diligence, is nevertheless conducted in a very different style from that in which the fields of Britain are made to yield their copious harvests. Of those extensive farms, with a large capital invested in them, stocked with fine breeds of cattle, and worked with implements of the most improved construction, China presents no vestige. The whole empire is divided into plots of one or two acres, separated by ditches, which serve as drains, or by narrow ridges, used as footpaths. These little possessions are in almost every instance tilled by the owner;† and even where they are let on lease, the character of farmer is completely identified with that of labourer, all the duty being executed by himself and his family. In a considerable proportion of the lands, it is performed by mere manual labour with the spade or the hoe.‡ Even where a rude plough is employed, the members of the

* Mémoires, tome ii. p. 404. † Staunton, vol. iii. p. 187.
‡ Barrow's Travels, p. 585.

Chinese Agricultural Family.

family are not unfrequently attached to it, and perform the part of oxen; and from this severe duty it was observed with concern that females were by no means exempted. English eyes have been scandalized by seeing a farmer steering a plough, to which his consort was yoked. Hence the "working wives of Kiang-see" are held in general estimation throughout the provinces.* Even where there is an animal to perform its appropriate functions, the small extent of the ground admits only one of the lowest class, whose diminutive frame can be supported by the straw, and the scanty herbage picked up in the ditches or on the narrow footpaths. Asses, mules, and buffaloes, are the species chiefly employed.†

* Staunton, vol. iii. p. 341. † Barrow's Travels, p. 493.

This extreme paucity of domestic animals was by no means characteristic of the earlier periods of the Chinese monarchy. At that time numerous flocks of sheep fed on the extensive pasture-grounds which surrounded the various capitals; and from the wool rich cloths were fabricated, which are now confined to the semi-Tartar provinces of Shan-see and Shen-see. Even in the time of Confucius, sheep were considered a principal part of the national wealth.* As tillage extended, a struggle took place between the cultivators and shepherds, in which the latter, after an obstinate resistance, were obliged to relinquish the whole champaign country, and to withdraw into the remote and mountainous districts.† They have been branded by the successful party with peculiar ignominy, being held even less respectable than merchants. Sheep have thus disappeared to such an extent from this vast region, that it is not supposed to contain so many as France; and mutton appears only at the tables of the great, for which it is supplied from Tartary.

The dairy, it may be also observed, forms no branch whatever of Chinese industry. When milk was wanted for the use of the English embassy, it was difficult to find an individual who knew how to draw it from the cow.‡ The rearing of horses, especially for war, was carried to a great extent under some of the early dynasties; the tributary princes vying with each other, and with the sovereign, in the number which they maintained. The emperors of the Han family are said to have kept 300,000, while those of the Tang race increased the

* Mémoires, tome xi. pp. 35, 38, 53. † Ibid. pp. 35, 36.
‡ Staunton, vol. iii. p. 181.

amount to 700,000; and magnificent studs becoming a rage among the grandees, the number at length exceeded that of labouring animals.* Under the weak and troubled dynasty of Song, the imperial cavalry was much diminished, and the conquering Mongols brought an ample host of their own.† The founder of the Ming branch directed his attention chiefly to provide the requisite amount for the posts, and the conveyance of public officers. Nearly the same course has been followed by the reigning family, who derive a sufficient supply from the Mantchoo studs and the horses sent in tribute by Tartar princes.‡ The Chinese follow a maxim, that horses should not be highly fed, but be supplied merely with what is necessary to render them serviceable, which, in respect to food, is confined to chopped straw or coarse grain.§ This practice is of course unfavourable to the production of a superior breed. Mr Barrow describes these quadrupeds generally as being of the most miserable quality. Even those imported from Tartary are small and ill trained; insomuch that a Scotch pony, wild from his native hills, might at once take his station among a regiment of their cavalry.‖

By keeping so small a number of cattle, the Chinese accomplish their object of diverting no portion of ground from the raising of human food. The animals are never permitted to graze; no artificial grasses are grown; they are kept in a stable or shed, and a scanty nutriment is picked up for them from the refuse of grain or the neglected borders of the fields. This advantage, however, is perhaps over-

* Mémoires, tome xi. p. 417-420. † Ibid. pp. 422, 425.
‡ Ibid. p. 428. § Ibid. p. 395. ‖ Barrow's Travels, p. 555.

balanced by the extreme deficiency of manure; for Adam Smith conceives that no system of agriculture can approach perfection, into which stall feeding does not largely enter. The Chinese certainly seek to supply this want by the most extraordinary industry, collecting from every quarter the appropriate substances, without any fastidious delicacy as to their nature or action on the olfactory nerves. Old men and children carry about baskets to receive mud, slime, and every species of refuse: even substances never thought of in Europe are highly prized here. The barbers carefully preserve every shred of hair cut from the heads of their customers, and obtain a price for it from the farmers, who consider it good for raising rice. Still greater attention is paid to a liquid substance, that Europeans seek only to remove from view, the most approved use of which is to steep the grain previous to sowing. Inviting receptacles are prepared along the streets, and are paved with materials not calculated to absorb moisture. Straw, and other dry articles, are thrown in to prevent evaporation.* Another laborious mode of improving soils is by mixing together those of opposite qualities, particularly stiff and marly clay with earth that is light and sandy.†

All these resources are still insufficient to keep the land in high condition. The imperfect plough, drawn by a feeble animal, merely scratches the ground to the depth of about four inches,‡ and is incapable of bringing up fresh earth to mingle with that previously cropped. The Chinese cannot, like the opulent English farmer, form a rich tilth, fully

* Barrow's Travels, pp. 564, 544. † Ibid. p. 563. ‡ Ibid. p. 566.

fitted for receiving and nourishing the seed. The operations of tillage, however, are carried on with minute and laborious care. To the wasteful mode of sowing by broadcast, they almost always prefer that of drilling, and sometimes of dibbling.* Availing themselves of the opportunity supplied by this mode, they extirpate the weeds so effectually, that not a vestige of them remains. Wherever the climate and soil admit, a double crop is procured, and even one of pulse is inserted between the two of grain. The terrace-culture of China is well known. The mountains, which are of considerable extent, are in many cases too steep for tillage; and, in tropical countries, every slope is disadvantageous, from the facility with which it allows the water to run off. The sides of the eminence are, therefore, formed into a series of level terraces rising above each other, while a stream collected at the top is distributed through the whole without almost any going to waste.†

Irrigation is carefully studied in every tropical country, where drought would render the lands altogether unproductive. But no people seem to equal the Chinese in the ingenious yet economical contrivances adopted for this purpose. The various expedients of buckets, wheels, and pumps, according as each is adapted to the particular spot, are put together and made to act in the most effective manner. The chain-pump and a great water-wheel are, in this point of view, much superior to the Persian and Egyptian wheels, and being, with the exception of the axis, constructed altogether of bamboo,

* Barrow's Travels, p. 554. † Van Braam, vol. i. pp. 110, 111; vol. ii. p. 280. Staunton, vol. iii. p. 306.

they are attended with little expense.* There is, besides, a small irrigating instrument which can be worked by a single hand, and one of which is kept by almost every farmer.†

The agriculture of China seems to suffer most from the imperfection of drainage. Those mighty waters which traverse the empire, and are the chief source of its fertility, often overspread the country in a manner extremely destructive. The inundations of the great rivers, which, during the early reigns, were felt as national calamities, have been restrained by powerful barriers, which, however, do not always prove sufficient. Mr Ellis, on his journey, saw the most miserable effects arising from a flood that had occurred five months before. Recent accounts describe the Yang-tse-kiang to have overflowed its banks to such an extent, that Nan-king was entirely laid under water.‡ There are also numerous lakes, which are peopled almost as fully as the land, as well as many extensive swamps and morasses which have hitherto baffled Chinese skill; and, indeed, even in England, the draining of fens is only a recent improvement. Hence, extensive tracts along the Great Canal, and south of the Po-yang Lake, present a very dreary and desolate aspect. Mr Barrow estimates, that nearly a fourth part of the empire is from this cause wholly unproductive.§

The objects served by agriculture may be divided into three classes,—food for man, which is here al-

* Staunton, vol. iii. pp. 313, 314, 334-338.
† Barrow's Travels, p. 540. Staunton, vol. iii. p. 315.
‡ Van Braam, vol. ii. pp. 120, 121. Ellis, vol. i. p. 394. Asiatic Journal (2d series), vol. viii. p. 101.
§ Barrow's Travels, p. 530-567. Staunton, vol. iii. pp. 224, 225, 332.

most exclusively grain; materials of manufacture; vegetable luxuries, chiefly substances of a stimulant and exhilarating quality.

The description of grain varies with the climate, which changes from the most intense tropical heat to the greatest cold incident to the temperate regions. That of Pe-king, indeed, is marked by striking extremes; for, while the summer glow is excessive, the winter presents a Siberian aspect, and all the waters are frozen, not excepting the mighty stream of the Yellow River. China, in this respect, seems to bear a greater resemblance to the United States than to European countries; and hence, while in the southern provinces rice and wheat are raised in perfection, culture in the north is nearly confined to two descriptions of holcus or millet.

Rice, considered as the staff of life, takes the lead among the objects of cultivation. In the provinces adapted for this grain, it forms the food of every class, and, elsewhere, of all except the poorest. It requires, however, not only an intense heat, but moisture so abundant, that the field on which it grows must be repeatedly laid under water. These requisites exist together only in the districts south of the Yellow River, the Yang-tse-kiang, and their several tributaries. Here, a vast extent of land is perfectly fitted for this most valuable crop. Confined, indeed, by powerful dykes, these rivers do not generally, like the Nile, overflow and cover the country; but by means of canals their waters are so widely distributed, that almost every farmer, when he pleases, can inundate his field. They supply, not only moisture, but a fertilizing mud or slime, washed down from the distant mountains. The cultivator

thus dispenses with manure, of which he labours under a great scarcity, and considers it enough if the grain be steeped in the liquid substance above alluded to. The Chinese always transplant their rice. A small space is enclosed and very thickly sown, after which a thin sheet of water is led or pumped over it; in the course of a few days the shoots appear, and when they have attained the height of six or seven inches, the tops are cut off, and the roots transplanted to a field prepared for the purpose, where they are set in rows about half a foot from each other. The whole surface is again supplied with moisture, which continues to cover the plants till they approach maturity, when the ground becomes dry. The first harvest is reaped in the end of May or beginning of June; the grain is cut with a small sickle, and carried off the field in frames suspended from bamboo-poles placed across a man's shoulders. The instruments for thrashing and clearing it from the husk are extremely simple and even rude. Meantime the stubble is burnt on the land, over which the ashes are spread as its only manure; a second crop is immediately sown, and reaped about the end of October, when the straw is left to putrefy on the ground, which is allowed to rest till the commencement of the ensuing spring.*

In the provinces immediately north of the Hoang-ho, and in the elevated tracts of the south, wheat, instead of rice, is cultivated with success.† Farther northwards, it becomes combined with the *Holcus sorghum*, or millet, which is the principal grain raised in the provinces along the Great Wall.

* Staunton, vol. iii. p. 216-218. † Barrow's Travels, pp. 508, 539.

In some favourable circumstances two crops are raised in the course of the season, but in general only one can be produced, though in many cases some kind of pulse is planted between the rows, which springs up after the grain is reaped.* Mr Barrow, however, does not consider Chinese industry so conspicuous here as in the middle and southern provinces; and the peasantry were also observed to be much poorer.† Pe-king and the court are supplied with almost every article of consumption from the south by the Great Canal. Beans, besides being intermingled with the holcus, are grown in separate fields. Rice, wheat, two kinds of millet, and beans, are the five species of grain offered in sacrifice as the staple products of the empire.‡ Esculent vegetables are, moreover, raised in abundance, every cottage being surrounded with a kitchen-garden. The *pe-tsai*, a species of colewort resembling lettuce, tasteless in itself, but rendered agreeable by sauces, is particularly relished. Onions, garlic, and other roots of pungent taste, are much sought for by the lower orders to correct the insipidity of the vegetable diet to which they are confined.§

Notwithstanding this diligent cultivation, the empire has often been afflicted with desolating famines. These seem sufficiently accounted for by its immense population and the comparatively insignificant supplies which can be drawn from abroad. No opulent farmers, no corn-merchants, or other capitalists, store up the surplus produce of one year to supply the deficiencies of another. The sole resource is in the public granaries formed by go-

* Barrow's Travels, p. 553, &c. † Ibid. p. 562.
‡ Du Halde, vol. ii. p. 121. § Barrow's Travels, pp. 493, 494, 501.

vernment, whence, in seasons of scarcity, grain is issued at a moderate rate to relieve the necessities of the poorest classes. It appears, however, that the imperial bounty is much intercepted by subordinate officers, and that these public donations are neither copious nor very easily procured. It may be observed, also, that rice, depending entirely upon a supply of water by artificial inundation, is, in seasons of drought, liable to a total failure, involving all the calamities of famine.*

We have already noticed the extremely limited number of animals in China, where every product is studiously reserved for the support of man; the few actually bred being for the use of government, or for the labours of agriculture. Almost the only species reared for food are hogs and ducks; the former of which can be fed upon refuse, the other can find subsistence for themselves upon the extensive lakes and marshes.† These, with sheep from Tartary, afford a sufficient supply for the tables of the opulent, but not such as to allow any for the sustenance of the great body of the people.

Immense as is the demand for human food, provision must also be made for clothing, and a proportion of the land be employed in raising the materials of manufacture. Silk holds the first place,—a rich and beautiful product, which seems native in China. The art of drawing this substance from the insects by which it is spun, as well as of weaving it into cloth, is ascribed to those early emperors, whose memory is held in the greatest veneration. The classical works of early Europe distinctly refer to this coun-

* Barrow's Travels, p. 584-586. Chinese Repository, January 1834.
† Barrow's Travels, p. 557-559.

try as the quarter whence was drawn, first the manufactured article, and then the insects yielding the raw material.* In proportion as sheep disappeared, the place of their wool was more and more supplied by silk; and the reign of Ouen-ti, of the Han dynasty, is mentioned as the period when this change took place.† The produce must indeed have been diminished, or, at least, its extension checked, by the introduction of cotton; still it is the dress most esteemed, and worn by all the more opulent classes. Silkworms are reared in all the provinces; but in Tche-kiang and the adjacent district of Kiang-nan, the manufacture is carried to the greatest perfection, and clothes almost the whole population.‡ The silk produced in these quarters bears a price in the market of Canton more than double that of the adjoining lands.§ The raw material is much superior to that of India, and, notwithstanding the perfection to which the culture has been carried in Italy, is still largely imported for the use of British manufacturers. Besides the vast supply derived from animals bred under cover, and fed on mulberry, a considerable quantity is obtained in the ruder tracts from a wild species, which lodge in the oak, the ash, and other forest-trees. These worms, indeed, are difficult to manage, and their produce is decidedly inferior to that of those regularly trained, being incapable of receiving any permanent dye. Its natural colour, however, is good; it is much more cheaply procured; and is, besides, of so much stronger a texture, that the cloth is supposed to last double the period. Hence it

* See above, vol. i. p. 151. † Mémoires, tome ii. p. 580.
‡ Barrow's Travels, p. 572.
§ M'Culloch's Commercial Dictionary, 2d edition, p. 1037.

is considered a valuable addition to the finer species reared by art.*

Cotton, though less valued, is now extensively cultivated, and forms the principal clothing of the great body of the people. Its comparatively recent introduction appears therefore wonderful, and by no means accordant with our idea of the immutability of Chinese customs. From various passages in the *king*, indeed, some writers have inferred that it was known at a very early period. It is certain, however, that under the long dynasty of the Tcheou, reaching down to the third century before the Christian era, no mention of this substance occurs. Under the Han and following races, it was still cultivated as a rare and curious plant; and the robe formed from it, A. D. 502, by the Emperor Ou-ti is considered a circumstance worthy the notice of history. Only the shrub species, valued chiefly for its flowers, was then grown in gardens; and the manner in which the capital was adorned by these is celebrated by a contemporary poet. It was not till the eleventh century that the tree, and its culture for the purposes of manufacture, were introduced from the Tartar province of Si-fan. It encountered a strong national prejudice; and the mere circumstance that it was a foreign plant was held as a sufficient ground for its exclusion. The posterity of Zingis, who soon after subjugated China, refused to admit this objection as valid; and even the Ming emperor, who restored a native government, overruled the opposition to an exotic vegetable which yielded such important advantages. It was therefore rapidly diffused, and so firmly established as no longer to be viewed as alien to the country.†

* Mémoires, tome ii. p. 584 593. † Ibid. p. 602-607.

Cotton requires a peculiar soil, tolerably rich, yet mingled with sand, and somewhat moist. If hard and dry, it must be irrigated by a stream of water. The ground should receive three ploughings, and be well manured; for which purpose the mud of rivers, canals, and ditches, is reckoned the most suitable. As the plants grow, the space between the rows must be hoed every eight or ten days, and even dug with the spade; and when a foot high, their tops are cut to make them shoot. This crop, being extremely profitable, is raised on all the lands fitted for its culture.* The finest is that produced in Kiang-nan,† from which is made the stuff called nankeen, possessing a durable property, which Europeans in vain attempt to imitate. This has been ascribed to a peculiar quality in the soil of the province; but it is more likely to arise from the extreme care bestowed on its cultivation. The great demand in Europe and America gave occasion to an attempt to raise it on improper soils; hence Nanking cotton lost its reputation, and the demand fell off till it was again supplied from the appropriate lands, and thus regained its character.‡

Dyeing stuffs for the extensive manufactures of China form, of course, a considerable article of trade, and the plants used for this purpose are generally different from those employed either in Europe or Western Asia. A species of the *polygonum*, cultivated in the same manner as the indigo-plant, yields a similar dye, though not in equal abundance. The *carthamus*, instead of carmine, which is seldom used, affords their finest red; from the cup of the acorn they

* Mémoires, tome ii. p. 616-620. † Barrow's Travels, p. 560.
‡ Van Braam, vol. ii. pp. 146, 141.

obtain a black, and from the buds and leaves of a species of *colutea*, a green dye.* The brilliant and durable tints which they impress on their painting and pottery, prove that the materials are both well selected and carefully prepared. Another important article is the varnish, with which they give such a rich gloss to their cabinet-wares. It is the gum distilled from a tree, which grows in the provinces of Se-tchuen and Kiang-see. The district of Kan-tcheou-fou, in the latter province, yields the finest. These trees, called *tsi*, resemble the ash, but are seldom more than fifteen feet high. The gum is not good till the tree is about eight years old, and it distils only during the summer nights, when incisions are made in the bark, and the juice is received into vessels placed beneath. The night is considered a good one, if twenty pounds of varnish are obtained from a thousand trees. The workmen employed have their hands and faces covered, and their skin otherwise defended from the fluid, which is said to produce violent inflammatory effects.†

Although the Chinese in general devote their soil exclusively to purposes of utility, yet, like all other nations, they seek to procure some vegetables yielding an infusion agreeable to the taste and exhilarating to the spirits. For this purpose, instead of wine and distilled liquors, they employ tea (a term corrupted from the Chinese *tcha*); and their taste in this respect has been sanctioned by its having become so favourite a beverage in countries at the opposite extremity of the globe. The principal species, or rather varieties, are three; one called

* Staunton, vol. ii. p. 348-350.
† Du Halde, vol. ii. p. 303-308.

song-lo, which is raised in the mountainous districts of Kiang-nan; and another, *vou-y*, grown on the hilly tracts of Fo-kien. These are well known to us under the appellations of green and bohea. The former has the highest flavour, and produces in the greatest degree all the effects of the leaf; but, as these are considered violent, and sometimes injurious, the milder quality of the bohea causes it to be preferred generally in China, as well as in our own country. The third variety is called *pou-eul*, and grows in the more elevated parts of Yun-nan; but though Sir George Staunton found it highly esteemed at Pe-king, it has never made its way into Europe.* Every province, besides, produces this commodity in greater or smaller quantities; but these three kinds alone are in high repute. The tea-plant is an evergreen shrub, which grows in the open air in every climate between the equator and the latitude of 45°; but the most favourable situation is between 25° and 33°. In appearance it somewhat resembles a myrtle, and bears yellow flowers, extremely fragrant.† About three years after it is planted, the leaves may be plucked for use. A few taken off in early spring, when they are first unfolded, are of exquisitely-fine flavour. At subsequent periods, three other crops are gathered, always diminishing in delicacy of flavour, but increasing in bulk. Thus are formed of black teas the four qualities of pekoe, souchong, congou, and simple bohea; of green, gunpowder, imperial, hyson, and twankay. The hyson is subdivided into hyson, young hyson, and hyson-skin. In prepar-

* Du Halde, vol. i. p. 13. Staunton, vol. iii. p. 45.
† Ellis, vol. ii. pp. 46, 47.

Drying of Tea.

ing the teas for market, some laborious processes are employed. The leaves are subjected separately to a manipulation, by which they are rolled into the curled shape in which they appear; afterwards they are garbled, or separated into lots of different qualities. They also undergo two successive dryings, which, in the case of the green, involve a very nice operation. The leaves are placed in iron pots or vases above a large fire, while a person continually stirs them with his hand, to guard against any injury from excessive heat,—a process which is represented in the accompanying plate, made from a native drawing. These labours are performed partly by the growers of the tea, partly by mer-

chants, who come at the proper season to make purchases.*

Among articles of luxurious consumption sugar may be mentioned, which is grown largely on the well-watered plains of the middle provinces, and on the same soils that are adapted for rice. As the plantations are on the usual small scale, the farmers could not afford a mill, even of the simplest construction. The extraction of the juice is performed by migratory workmen, who convey along the rivers and canals an apparatus which would be considered very rude by a West India proprietor. It is erected in a central spot, to which the produce of several farms can be conveniently brought. The Chinese cane is much superior to that of India, and the natives have long possessed the art of refining it into sugar-candy, in which form it is exported to various countries of the East.† Tobacco was observed with surprise by the late embassies, growing from one extremity of the empire to the other in quantity sufficient for an immense consumption.‡ Sir George Staunton is not disposed to believe that this leaf was introduced from America or Europe among a people so jealous of foreign usages, and whose annals make no mention of such an event. It may be observed, however, that, had it been an indigenous product, it was likely to be described in Chinese books; but *no notice* is taken of it by the early travellers or by Du Halde. The example of cotton, and more recently of opium, seems to manifest, that the supposed antipathy of this

* M'Culloch's Dictionary, 2d edition, pp. 1139, 1140.
† Staunton, vol. iii. pp. 292, 293.
‡ Barrow's Travels, p. 504. Ellis, vol. v. p. 318.

people to any foreign article which affords either use or pleasure is quite imaginary. Instead of the costly processes by which this narcotic is prepared in the West, nothing more is done than to hang it up on cords to dry in the open air. They raise also aromatic plants, which, though not equal to those of the Indian islands, enable them to dispense with any large importation. The mountains of the west yield a cassia, used instead of cinnamon; while the seeds of a species of *fagara* supply the place of pepper.*

Although this people generally reserve the soil for cultivated vegetables, and studiously extirpate those which nature spontaneously produces, yet, among this latter class, there are some of such extreme utility, that they are still carefully cherished, and allowed to cover the marshy plains and the mountain-sides. Of these none equals in value the bamboo, which enters more or less into almost every Chinese fabric. The numberless boats and barks that ply on the rivers are not only built, but rigged with this material; for the bark yields a rope at once light and strong, serving completely the purpose of a cable. It supplies the place of metal in mills, water-wheels, and other machines; and even aqueducts are formed of it. From the most valuable articles which adorn the apartments of the prince, to the smallest tool handled by the meanest mechanic, bamboo is sure to find a place in all.† Even its tender buds and flowers are cut like asparagus, and, when seasoned, afford a favourite dish. Besides these important purposes, we have seen that it is the chief instrument for maintaining criminal police, with

* Staunton, vol. ii. p. 349. † Barrow's Travels, p. 309.

which offenders, from one end of the kingdom to the other, are daily chastised. The tallow-tree, which grows on the hills of Tche-kiang and Kiang-nan, serves also a very useful end. It is about the size of the pear or cherry tree, and the fruit is enclosed in capsules, each containing three kernels or nuts, covered with a substance resembling tallow in texture, and even in smell. This is separated by first pounding and then boiling the fruit, when the inflammable substance rises to the top and is skimmed off. The candles made from it, though somewhat soft, give a very tolerable light. Even the kernels or nuts yield, on expression, an oil fit for lamps.* The camphor-tree is valued less for its aromatic substance than for the timber, which is used in the most valuable buildings, and for the masts of large vessels. For these purposes the trunk is reserved, though it would yield the best gum, and that ingredient is obtained only by boiling the branches, twigs, and leaves. The people, however, setting a peculiar value on this substance, procure a superior description from Sumatra, and export their own, with which the British market is chiefly supplied.† The pine, the larch, and other useful timber, clothe the summits of the loftiest mountains, and are transported in immense rafts along the canals for the supply of the northern provinces.

The mineral wealth of China is very imperfectly known. The mines are situated chiefly in Yunnan, Koei-tcheou, and other mountainous districts towards the west, which have scarcely been visited

* Du Halde, vol. ii. p. 250-253.

† Staunton, vol. iii. pp. 288, 289. M'Culloch's Dictionary, 2d edition, p. 215.

by Europeans. The reports of the missionaries are vague, and probably somewhat exaggerated; yet it does appear that there is a good supply of all the perfect metals, with the exception of platina; and though they are not probably smelted and fused with the same skill as in Europe, processes are employed by which they are purified and fitted for use.* Elegant and useful combinations of them have been formed, unknown to our artists. The Chinese boast of their gold-mines, which the government, it is said, does not permit to be worked. The actual supply of this metal is from alluvial deposites in the provinces of Yun-nan and Se-tchuen. It is pale, soft, and ductile, and is used, not for coin, but solely for ornamental purposes. Bracelets made of it are supposed to serve as amulets, and it is formed into leaf and thread for gilding and embroidery.† Iron is not well smelted, and is neither so malleable nor so strong as the British, nor is the work made of it so well polished. It is, however, skilfully cast into very thin plates.‡ Copper is abundant, and fabricated with peculiar excellence. Mixed with a large proportion of tin,§ and some bismuth, it affords the material of the gong, which produces a louder sound than any other metallic combination; but it is very brittle. The most elegant mixture is that of the pe-tong, or white copper, which, showing a beautiful colour and high polish, can scarcely be distinguished from silver. Some missionaries have not hesitated to assert, that it is a pe-

* Du Halde, vol. i. pp. 22, 23. Staunton, vol. iii. p. 380. Barrow, in Supplement to Encyc. Brit. vol. iii. p. 101.

† Staunton, vol. iii. p. 381. ‡ Ibid. p. 383.

§ Barrow, in Supplement to Encyc. Brit. vol. iii. p. 102.

culiar metal found in China alone; but the English seem to have ascertained that it is chiefly formed of copper and zinc. The latter, called by the Chinese tutenague, is obtained from a rich and very pure ore, which they reduce to powder, and by a peculiar process cause it to combine with the copper.* Tin is not produced in quantity equal to the great demand, and it is therefore largely imported. Mercury, chiefly in the form of cinnabar, occurs abundantly, particularly in Shan-see. It is said to be obtained from wells, into which it is only necessary to throw shrubs and set fire to them. Hence, probably, was derived the report, which some have credited, of this metallic substance being found upon leaves.† It is employed for colouring, for medicine, and its fumes are even sometimes inhaled like tobacco. Coals abound in all the provinces, particularly in the northern districts.‡ They are used for the ordinary purposes, and are of singular advantage in a country where ground could be so ill spared for growing timber.

The Chinese are eminent as a manufacturing as well as an agricultural people. Like other nations of the East, they have some very fine fabrics, which Europeans have learned from them, without being able fully to rival. Their cloths, indeed, though rich and substantial, do not possess that exquisitely-delicate texture for which those of Hindostan are so celebrated; and the national policy, which makes the dress of all its functionaries an affair of state, transmitted by statute from age to age, must have more

* Staunton, vol. iii. p. 382.
† Memoires, tome xi. p. 307, &c.
‡ Ibid. p. 334. Du Halde, vol. i. p. 22.

or less cramped this branch of industry. The ingenuity of the Chinese mechanic has been chiefly exercised upon articles of domestic luxury and ornament, in which the great may indulge their taste without control,—lanterns, cabinets, toys, and, above all, porcelain.

Silk, a texture so ancient and peculiar to the country, still affords the dress which, above all others, is considered rich and valuable. It is the prescribed attire of all the high officers of government, and is worn by every one who makes any pretensions to opulence. Even soldiers are not considered in full uniform, or fit for parade, unless in silk.* Fine robes of the same material are the chief presents made by the emperor to foreign princes, ambassadors, or subjects whom he wishes to honour. Yet this manufacture, like most of those in Asia, is carried on without capital, without division of labour, by single individuals, each of whom spins, weaves, and dyes his own web. The fabrics produced are, notwithstanding, extremely rich, and, in many cases, painted and embroidered with uncommon splendour. Silk-twist, cords, and tassels, are also made of great beauty.† The last are wrought in a peculiar manner upon frames placed perpendicularly, and diminishing upwards like a cone.‡ Velvets and gauzes have not been carried to nearly the same perfection as in Europe.

Cotton-cloth is now a still more extensive branch, being used by the great body of the people, who,

* Mémoires, tome vii. p. 33.

† Barrow, in Supplement to Encyc. Brit. vol. iii. pp. 101, 102.

‡ China, its Costume, Arts, &c. (from the French of Bertin, 1813), vol. ii. p. 84.

though generally poor, are more substantially clothed than the other nations of tropical Asia. Such being its destination, little pains are taken to render it fine, as muslin and calico have no attraction for the grandees of the empire. Yet Nan-king produces the elegant article which bears its name. The colour is the natural one of the cotton, which, when pure, has always more or less of a yellow tint. Only a limited quantity is fabricated, chiefly for exportation, while the Chinese import largely the inferior cotton of India, to be employed for home consumption.

Porcelain, often vulgarly called china, is another commodity originating in this country, and in which it still excels all other nations. But even there, so far as superior quality is concerned, it is confined to a single place in Kiang-see, named King-te-tching, which, though ranking only as a village, is said to contain upwards of a million of inhabitants. This manufacture, however, is not, like others in Asia, conducted on a small scale by detached individuals; on the contrary, the division of labour is carried to a very great extent. The successive processes of preparing the materials, forming the paste, glazing, painting, baking, with the various subdivisions of each, are executed by different persons; so that, according to some statements, seventy hands are employed in making a single cup. The work is conducted in spacious enclosures surrounded by high walls; and as the materials are costly, and brought from some distance, the capital invested in a porcelain-factory must be very considerable. The number of these is said to be only

five hundred;* so that, while a city containing a population of a million is supported by them, each must be on a large scale. The wages, it appears, are exceedingly low. When this beautiful production was first brought to Europe, very strange reports were spread, representing it as made of egg-shells, or those of certain fishes after being long buried in the earth. D'Entrecolles, however, who resided several years at King-te-tching as a missionary, had a full opportunity of observing the process; of which he has given a detailed account, though somewhat imperfect, owing to his want of scientific knowledge. The two substances employed are by the Chinese called *pe-tun-tse* and *kao-lin;* the former being a species of granite, where quartz predominates, and which does not contain a particle of iron. It is reduced to powder by a very laborious method, being first beaten into small pieces by huge iron hammers, and then ground down by a pestle and mortar,—an object which, it is conceived, might be effected in a much superior manner by the improved English mills. This powder, however, would not possess sufficient consistence, were it not mixed with the kao-lin, a stiff clay supposed by a learned writer to have its origin in felspar or graphic granite. It is said also to be the *gronan-clay* of the Cornish miners, and the same as that which is found near Alençon and St Yrieix in France. The Chinese, when they heard that Europeans were attempting to make porcelain of the pe-tun-tse without this alloy, said, jeeringly, they would have a body composed of flesh without bones. This substance readily dissolves in

* Lardner, Cabinet Cyclopædia, vol. xxvi. p. 120, History of the Manufacture of Porcelain and Glass.

water, but resists fire so effectually as to remain unaltered in a furnace sufficient to fuse granite. The fineness of the porcelain, however, depends upon the proportion of the kao-lin to the pe-tun-tse. In the first class, the two materials are in equal quantity; in the second, the kao-lin is to the other as four to six; in the third and most inferior, as one to three. Of late, a substance called *hoa-she*, or *wha-she*, supposed to be the English soap-rock, has been often used in preference to kao-lin. It makes an article of very fine grain, well fitted for receiving colours, but is three times as expensive. These materials, thus prepared and mixed, are laboriously kneaded till they become a thick paste, which must at the same time be so carefully purified from every extraneous particle as not to retain even a hair nor a grain of sand. It is then spread over the smooth surface of large slates, till it acquire the due degree of tenacity; after which the wheel or moulds are employed to bring it nearly into the desired form, which is perfected with the chisel. When the vessel is thus reduced to the proposed shape, the next task is to varnish it with a composition denominated *che-kao*, which is supposed to be gypsum mingled with a certain ingredient usually obtained by burning together quicklime and fern-leaves.

At this stage the finer process of painting begins; and the division of labour is carried to the same extent in this as in other departments. One man draws the circle near the edge, another traces the flowers, and a third colours them; rivers, mountains, animals, and men, are executed by different hands. As these works, however, are all performed by me-

Baking of Porcelain.

chanical labourers, paid at the same low rate with the others, it cannot excite surprise that they should display those defects of design which are so glaringly manifest. The chief care seems bestowed on the preparation of the colours, the brilliancy and durability of which still surpass our best pigments. The finest are the blue or azure, prepared from the lapis lazuli, and the *tsiu* or violet; but the former is said to be less frequently used, since a cheaper substitute has been supplied from Europe.

The porcelain thus shaped and embellished is still only a soft paste, which a rude touch would destroy. To bestow the due consistence, it must be baked, or subjected to the action of fire. The furnaces, composed sometimes of iron, though more commonly of earth, were formerly about six feet square, but of late have been made considerably larger. The pieces, before being placed in the oven, are enclosed in earthen cases lined on the inside with fine sand, by

which the paste is protected from the direct action of the flame; and they are lifted into these, not with the hand, but by means of a small string, moved gently yet quickly with a kind of wooden fork. The smaller pieces are then laid upon saucers, and introduced into the oven, the finer kinds being placed in the centre. As soon as it is filled the entrance is shut,—an opening being however left, through which two men, relieving each other, thrust in continually fresh pieces of wood, in such abundance, that 180 loads are usually spent upon the contents of a single furnace. Apertures are made at the top, called the eyes, through which the workman discovers whether the contents are duly baked. He considers this as accomplished when the cases are redhot; at which stage the paste appears of the proper consistence, and the colours duly incorporated. The fuel is then withdrawn, but the articles still remain a considerable time in the cavity. This application of fire is the most delicate part of the process, depending much on the state of the atmosphere and other variable circumstances. Sometimes, when the dishes are taken out, the whole are found converted into a mass as hard as stone; and it seldom happens that some of them do not suffer injury to a greater or less extent.

The emperors, and other opulent individuals, have occasionally expressed a wish to have porcelain in pieces of great size,—three feet long and upwards. But such undertakings have seldom or never succeeded; and, in general, if the attempt be made to extend the plate beyond a foot, it warps and becomes useless. Accordingly, when the merchants at Canton require large casts, for urns, picture-frames,

or similar purposes, the workmen unite separate portions, varnishing the points of juncture so nicely that they are scarcely discernible.

A variety of opinion has prevailed respecting the comparative excellence of ancient and modern porcelain. The partisans of the former relate that certain pieces dug up, after being long buried in the earth, have been found possessed of exquisite beauty. It is replied on the other side, that these were select specimens of the finest workmanship, which, in times of distress, the owners sought to conceal under ground, and hence they cannot be held to indicate any general superiority in the art. The same explanation may be satisfactorily urged in opposition to another theory, namely, that the appearance of the plates is remarkably improved by remaining long under ground.*

This beautiful material is applied to a much greater variety of ornamental purposes in China than in Europe. It is converted into tables and other articles of furniture, sometimes even into musical instruments, though an attempt once made to frame an organ out of it proved unsuccessful.

The Chinese mode of working in metals has not been very much observed; but Mr Barrow was disposed to consider it on the whole very creditable to them. They make a variety of articles in a handsome manner, and in some particular points excel Europeans. Their white copper, and the sonorous effect produced by their gongs, have not yet been successfully imitated. They cut different kinds of stone very tastefully into the form of animals,

* Du Halde, vol. ii. pp. 309-355. Staunton, vol. iii. pp. 299, 301. Lardner's Cyclopædia, vol. xxvi. p. 108, &c.

flowers, rocks, and even entire landscapes; but the hardware, though similar to that of England, is inferior both in quality and neatness.*

Besides these objects, which may be considered regular manufactures, the Chinese fabricate a number of beautiful little works, which with us would scarcely rank above toys; yet the exquisite skill displayed in them, and the great scale on which they are produced, entitle them to a certain consideration. Particular notice is due to their large lanterns, which are made of horn, perfectly transparent, and without a flaw; although a small portable stove, with an iron boiler, and a pair of common pincers, are all the implements used by the artificers.† The lantern, indeed, seems their favourite mode of displaying gayety and magnificence. The English embassy were completely dazzled by the splendour with which the numerous vessels passing along the river were lighted up. There is even an annual celebration, called the Feast of Lanterns, in which the empire, from one end to the other, is in a blaze of illumination. A large collection of drawings, made by native artists, and now in the possession of the East India Company, gives the most brilliant idea, both of the elaborate elegance of their forms and the splendour of their colours; some notion of which may be obtained from the specimen we have here selected. Admiration is also justly excited by their tea-chests and other cabinet-wares, constructed only of light bamboo, but richly adorned with spangles laid on with black varnish, in the form of plants,

* Barrow, in Supplement to Encyclopædia Britannica, vol. iii. p. 101. Travels, p. 341.

† Barrow, in Supp. to Encyclopædia Britannica, vol. iii. p. 101.

Ornamented Lantern.

birds, insects, and other animals. The varied iridescent colours they exhibit are produced by the thin laminæ of a particular shell, from which they are separated by boiling.* Mr Barrow moreover observes:—"In cutting of ivory they stand unrivalled even at Birmingham, that great nursery of the arts and manufactures, where I understand it has been attempted, by means of a machine, to cut many of their articles in imitation of those of the Chinese; but the experiment, although ingenious, has not hitherto succeeded to that degree so as to produce articles fitted to vie with those of the latter. Nothing can be more exquisitely beautiful than the fine open work displayed in a Chinese fan, the sticks of which would seem to be singly cut by the hand; for whatever pattern may be required, or a shield with coat of arms, or a cypher, the whole will be finished, according to the drawing, at the shortest notice. The two outside sticks are full of bold sharp work, and are cut in such a manner as could not be performed any other way than by the hand; yet the most finished and beautiful of their fans may be purchased at Canton for five to ten Spanish dollars. Out of a solid ball of ivory, with a hole in it not larger than half an inch in diameter, they will cut from nine to fifteen distinct hollow globes, one within another, all loose, and capable of being turned round in every direction, and each of them carved full of the same kind of open work that appears on the fans. A very small sum of money is the price of one of these difficult trifles. Models of temples, pagodas, and other pieces of architecture, are beautifully worked in ivory; and from the shav-

* Barrow, *ut supra*, p. 101.

ings, interwoven with pieces of quills, they make neat baskets and hats, which are as light and pliant as those of straw. In short, all kinds of toys for children, and other trinkets and trifles, are executed in a more elegant manner, and for less money, in China, than in any other part of the world."*

Besides these general occupations, the people are remarkable for a peculiar neatness and dexterity in every kind of handiwork,—a singular readiness in imitating the labours of other artists, as well as in performing every task prescribed to them. Some glass lustres, belonging to the British embassy, consisting of several hundred pieces, were taken down in half an hour by two of them, who had never seen such a thing before, and put up with equal facility. A small piece having been broken from the dome of the planetarium, the English mechanics in vain endeavoured, by the aid of a diamond, to cut out another according to the requisite curved-line; but this was speedily effected by a native workman. His invention was the more remarkable, as there is no manufacture of glass in the empire.

The Chinese have been represented as adverse to all traffic, and imbued with a ridiculous pride, which makes them view their own country as producing every thing desirable, and rendering them independent of foreign, or, as they term it, barbarian intercourse. But more accurate information seems to establish the fact, that no people are more solicitous to acquire riches, or less fastidious as to the means. We may add, that the wealthy class are as desirous as in any other land to procure whatever appears to them useful or agreeable, without any

* Travels, pp. 308, 309.

scrupulous inquiry as to how or whence it comes. Full proof of this is afforded by the high value set on birds' nests, and similar fantastic luxuries, procured from the oriental islands, as well as by the consumption of opium on so vast a scale. The real obstacle to commerce arises from the jealous policy observed by them in common with all other Asiatic despotisms. Ancient Egypt, Persia, and India, sought, in like manner, to withdraw their subjects from foreign connexion. A potentate, already in possession of every thing deemed desirable, dreads nothing so much as change, and views with alarm the new habits and ideas which may be introduced by communication with strangers. It is not wonderful that this apprehension should have been felt in a great degree respecting Europeans,—a people, from a remote and unknown region, wielding a mighty power, and displaying in their conduct no common share of enterprise and ambition. With regard to them, particularly, the Chinese government, without absolutely prohibiting commercial dealings, has allowed them only at a single point, and with the least possible intercourse. But, under every restriction, their foreign trade, though by no means proportioned to the extent and resources of the country, is very considerable; and, as it is the subject in which our countrymen are chiefly interested, we have reserved it for a separate chapter, which will be furnished by a gentleman who possesses the best sources of information. We shall therefore confine our remarks at present to that more extensive domestic commerce which subsists between the different provinces of the empire.

Notwithstanding the uniform aspect which this vast country at first view exhibits, careful observation

will show that many productions abound in one part which are wanting in another; and ample scope is thereby afforded for mutual exchange. Even rice is raised only in the central and southern provinces, whence the whole consumption of the north must be furnished. Sugar is confined within nearly the same limits. The richer tissues of silk and cotton are carried to perfection only at Nan-king, and other great cities of Kiang-nan and Tche-kiang. Valuable porcelain, fabricated at King-te-tching alone, is distributed from that point over the whole empire. In consequence of the plains being so entirely brought under culture, timber grows only on the mountains, particularly the lofty range which traverses the south; whence it must be conveyed for the supply of the great capitals. Tea, again, the universal beverage, is not to be found of fine quality except in the few districts already mentioned. Salt, extracted from sea-water on the coast, forms a most bulky article of transport. Although these are the principal commodities, there are obviously many others, the conveyance of which, on a scale requisite for the wants of so vast a population, must give occasion to a very extensive inland commerce.

Another circumstance which adds vastly to this traffic is, that the court, and with it the great body of opulent families, are resident at Pe-king, near the northern frontier, and in a country which yields scarcely a single article of elegance or luxury. All the richer products of the soil, and all the finer manufactures, must, of course, be brought to them from the central and southern provinces. It may be observed, however, that, as the government receives a great part of its taxes in kind, and pays its officers,

who are the chief consumers, in the same way, a large proportion of this intercourse is rather the transmission of tribute than a commerce for mutual benefit. We have had repeated occasion to observe the manner in which the canals were covered by the fleets of imperial barges conveying rice, timber, salt, and other bulky commodities.

The coasting-trade, though not encouraged by government, on account of its diminishing the transit-dues, is yet pretty extensive. This, as well as the foreign traffic, centres chiefly on the shores of Fo-kien, inhabited by a peculiar race, fully imbued with the spirit of maritime enterprise. Its ports form a link between the northern and southern provinces, sending tea and sugar to Kiang-nan, Pe-che-lee, and Mantchoo Tartary; from which last country pease and drugs are received in return. Amoy, situated on an island in a bay on the most barren part of this coast, contains, beyond any other place in the empire, numerous merchants, who own a considerable proportion of the capital and shipping employed along the coast.* Fou-tcheou-fou, on a large navigable river, and supposed to possess 400,000 inhabitants, presents also a scene of busy industry; the timber and tobacco, brought down by canals from the hills in the interior, forming its chief staples.† Ning-po, the emporium of Hang-tcheou-fou, somewhat disappointed Lord Macartney's embassy; but the officers of the Amherst found there the materials of an extensive trade, and the place appeared to contain from 250,000 to 300,000 people.‡ That great city is likewise connected with the sea by Sha-

* Report of Ship Amherst, pp. 13, 14. † Ibid. pp. 56, 57.
‡ Report, pp. 107, 108.

poo, which is also described as a port of very considerable magnitude. Shang-hai, in Kiang-nan, at the mouth of the Woo-sung, which communicates with the Great Canal, is thus at once the emporium of Sou-tcheou-fou, and in a great measure of the Yang-tse-kiang. It is as large as Fou-tcheou-fou, and ranks next to Canton in commercial importance. The gentlemen just mentioned saw in seven days 400 junks, of from 100 to 400 tons burden, enter the harbour from the north, chiefly from Tien-sing-fou and the ports of Tartary, bringing flour and pease.* The rocky coast of Shan-tung is known to contain several emporia, though of less magnitude; and Lord Macartney's retinue, in sailing along it, observed symptoms of cheerful and busy traffic. The great centre of the trade of Pe-che-lee is at Tien-sing-fou, which, with the approaches to it, has been described in our account of the British embassy. Kin-tcheou and Kae-tcheou are the chief ports of Mantchoo Tartary,—a country which has been much improved by its intercourse with China.

In the southern provinces, Ching-hai, or Ting-hai, about 200 miles to the east of Canton, is the seat of a flourishing commerce. The towns in the mountainous provinces to the westward are of secondary importance, and very little known.

But it is upon the water-communications throughout the interior of the empire that the Chinese have made the most lavish display of their industry and resources. At the time when there was scarcely a navigable canal known in Europe, or any of the western countries of Asia, China was pervaded, from

* Report, pp. 209, 210.

one extremity to the other, by these great channels of trade. Compared to them, those formed anciently in Egypt, and during the middle ages in Lombardy, were on a very small scale, and, besides, were chiefly intended for purposes of irrigation. The European nations, indeed, having now applied to this object their powers of art and invention, have, as in most other things, left the Orientals so far behind, as to be entitled to consider their processes as comparatively very rude. Those wonders of science and machinery, by which the greatest obstacles are overcome, copious reservoirs formed, and a regular navigation carried on, are in China unknown; such purposes being either not attained at all, or effected by the most prodigious expenditure of human labour. The making of a canal here amounts to little more than changing the course of a river. The Luen, which presents itself at the most elevated part of the Great Canal, is made to divide into two branches, one flowing south, the other north; so that light objects, thrown in at a very small distance from each other, will be carried in opposite directions. Thence it moves with a sensible current, varying in breadth and depth, and with considerable sinuosities, till it reaches the Euho on the north, and the Hoang-ho on the south. All the streams which cross its path, as far as necessary, are directed into it. If the level of the country is too high, the ground is dug deep enough to allow the water to pass; if too low, mounds are erected, along the summit of which it is conducted. This last operation has been performed on a stupendous scale in the tract immediately north of the Hoang-ho, where the canal is elevated to a considerable height above an extensive lake on one

side, and a swamp on the other. It is accomplished by immense embankments of earth, supported by retaining-walls twelve feet thick, and secured at the top by clamps of iron. In other places, when passing near cities, travellers see themselves sailing on a level with the tops of the houses. There is another tract, where, on the contrary, a passage is obtained by cutting the ground down to the depth of eighty feet. In case of an abrupt change of level, the ascent or descent is effected, not by locks, but by inclined planes of wood, over which the vessels are raised or lowered by manual labour; and the number of persons to whom employment is thereby afforded would be considered an objection to any change of method.* Flood-gates are also constructed to prevent the water from being dissipated, and sluices to carry it away when deemed superfluous.

This national work is carried in one line not less than 500 miles, crossing the great rivers Hoang-ho and Yang-tse-kiang, till it terminates near the city of Hang-tcheou-fou. From its northern extremity there is a communication by rivers to within twelve miles of the capital; and from its junction with the Yang-tse-kiang the navigation is continued, by means of that stream and the Kan-kiang, to the foot of the mountain-boundary of Quang-tung. There are other large canals, the number of which it is difficult to ascertain; but, in general, travellers observe, that where the natural waters terminate their place is supplied by these artificial ones; and that the progress of their barges suffers only a short interruption from mountains, because on the opposite sides of them fresh means of embarkation are always ready.

* Barrow, p. 512.

Compared with this grand system of water-communication, land-carriage is little regarded; and Mr Barrow believes, that in the whole extent of the empire there is hardly a road that can be considered better than a footpath.* The value of the ground, the scarcity of cattle for wagons, the almost exclusive use of chairs and litters for the convenience of travellers, and of coolies or porters for the transfer of goods, render any greater breadth unnecessary. They contrive, indeed, to employ in these narrow tracks a very peculiar species of conveyance. To loaded wheelbarrows they attach a sail, which, when the wind is favourable, materially aids their progress; and whole fleets of these vehicles may be seen moving along.† Milton even alludes to the plains

> "Of Sericana, where Chineses drive
> With sails and wind their cany waggons light."

After all, where a road does become actually necessary to connect any of their points of intercourse, the inhabitants spare neither cost nor labour in making it complete. For example, the avenue leading from the capital to its port is at once magnificent and commodious. The surface is perfectly level; and the middle part, for the breadth of twenty feet, is paved with flags of granite. Again, the road over the mountains of Tche-kiang, though it be narrow, is covered with fine gravel from the neighbouring hills, and kept quite smooth. In the lofty barrier of Quang-tung, as has already been observed, a great part of the summit of the Mei-ling mountain has been excavated in order to facilitate the passage.

In a country so completely intersected by canals

* Barrow's Travels, p. 513.
† Staunton, vol. ii. p. 243. Van Braam, vol. i. pp. 96, 152.

and rivers, bridges, of course, must be very numerous; and in these there has been made an elaborate display, both of solid construction and architectural ornament. Some, built at the mouths of estuaries, are of stupendous magnitude,—such as we have seen described by the early Spanish missionaries. Those on the line of the Great Canal are not in general so spacious, but are very frequent. Van Braam saw, along a single quay, the channel crossed by no fewer than thirty, all of hewn stone, which must have been brought from a distance of not less than fifty miles. Such works are the more laborious, as they are made as lofty as possible, not to obstruct the navigation. Some are so elevated as to allow the largest vessels to pass under them; others require only the rigging to be partially lowered.* Hence, indeed, they become quite unfit for the passage of wagons, or carriages of any description; but this circumstance is not much regarded. When placed in conspicuous situations, the balustrades are profusely embellished with columns, sculptured dragons, and other animals,—while the extremities are adorned with pavilions and triumphal arches.

The barks by which this immense traffic, both by sea and land, is carried on, must of necessity be very numerous. Navarette does not hesitate to assert, that there are more vessels in China than in all the rest of the world put together,—an assertion which appeared much exaggerated till we found Mr Barrow using very nearly the same expressions.† In fact, if we include all the kinds of craft, the statement will not perhaps appear at all extravagant.

* Barrow's Travels, p. 337.
† Churchill's Collection, vol. i. p. 27. Travels, p. 399.

We begin with the vessels employed to sail along the coasts and in the open sea, or, in other words, the junks, which seem to have been first contrived with the view of plying in bays and rivers, for which they are well adapted. The immutable policy of the government appears to have early fixed their form, and now prohibits any change, under penalty of paying the high duties exacted from foreign ships. They are very much raised at both ends; the bow, or fore part, is an even surface, like the stern, and there is no keel. The mast consists only of a single tree, often enormously thick, to which is attached one huge sail of matting constructed of the fibres of the bamboo, and stretched by poles; in some cases it furls and unfurls like a fan. The hold is broad, though not deep, and the bottom almost completely flat. From their structure, joined to the lightness of the upperworks, they draw only about half the depth of water of an English vessel of the same size; by which means they are enabled to sail with greater facility along shallow coasts, and to pass the bars of rivers.* But when steered into the ocean, they do not take sufficient hold of the water to withstand those dreadful tempests which render the Chinese seas perhaps the most perilous on the globe. Accordingly, a large proportion of such as are engaged in foreign trade are annually wrecked; and the return of a junk from such a voyage is celebrated as a species of jubilee.† The hold is divided into about a dozen compartments, each belonging to a distinct proprietor, and separated from the others by planks caulked with a cement consisting of lime and oil, mixed with a few scrapings of bamboo. This arrangement, though it must

* Barrow's Travels, pp. 37, 38. † Ibid. p. 41.

diminish the stowage, has the advantage of preventing water from damaging the cargo in general, and even from endangering the safety of the vessel.*

These unwieldy hulks are guided with a very moderate degree of skill; for the Chinese, having never renounced the belief that the earth is a flat surface, make of course no correct observations of latitude and longitude. In place of charts they have only rude sketches drawn on gourds, the round form of which, indeed, affords an approximation to the real figure of the globe; but of this they are wholly ignorant.† Yet they possess a compass, invented long prior to the period when that important instrument became known in Europe; which, though of a different and less elaborate structure, is found very useful in practice. The magnetic needle is seldom more than an inch long, and not a line thick. Its mobility is prevented by an ingenious contrivance, and its lightness exempts it from the derangement occasioned by the magnetic power of the dip or inclination, which the weight below the point of suspension is more than sufficient to counteract in all situations on the globe; whereas, the arrangements made for this purpose in Europe can never be perfectly accurate, unless at the very place for which the apparatus was constructed. They have one circle of eight and another of twenty-four divisions; while on others are delineated the cycle of sixty years, and other antique and mystical representations, to which great reverence is attached. They do not, like us, regard the needle as pointing to the north but to the south pole. On setting sail,

* Staunton, vol. ii. pp. 135, 136. † Ibid. p. 65.

they direct the ship's head at once towards the place for which they are destined, and endeavour to steer for it with as little deviation as possible.*

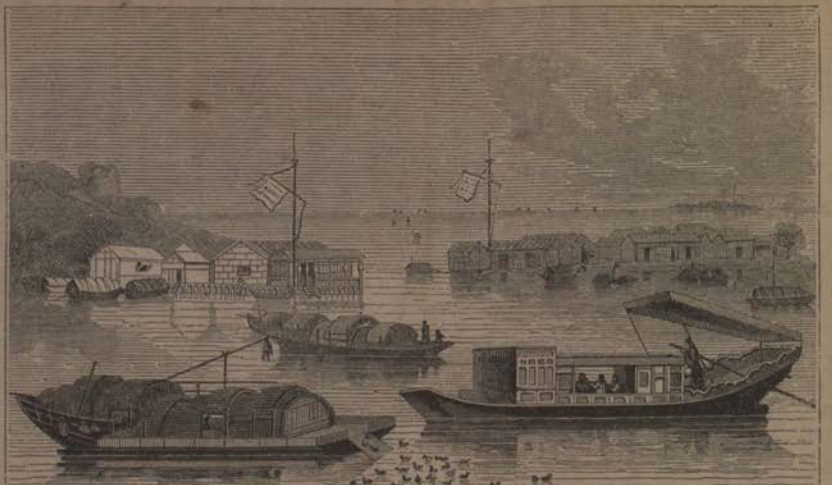
The vessels which ply on the canals and rivers undoubtedly far exceed in number those employed in the inland navigation of any other country. They transport, almost exclusively, the commodities of the most extensive empire on the face of the earth. The persons, too, by whom the barges are usually worked, make them the sole abode of themselves and their families, and seek to enjoy on board all the conveniences of a habitation ashore. The state-barges, which convey the mandarins and other high officers, are, as it were, floating palaces, where all the splendour of an official mansion is maintained. The barks employed to convey the tribute are usually reckoned at 9999, which may be taken as the Chinese round number for 10,000; and their amount is tripled in consequence of the spacious accommodation provided for the residence of the crews with their wives and families. Some of them are highly and variously ornamented,—others, contrived solely for use, are of a plainer construction. The object, as in the junks, is to make them capacious, and at the same time of light materials and flat bottomed, so as to draw the least possible depth of water. Most of the yachts supplied to the British embassy, though eighty feet long, and standing very high above the river, did not draw more than a foot and a half. Hence the great advantage of being able to navigate any stream, however shallow, up almost to its source; so that, according to Mr Barrow, vessels of large

* Barrow's Travels, pp. 38, 39. Staunton, vol. ii. p. 67-71.

size may be seen sailing through channels in which no European would think of launching any craft whatever.*

Fishing is another pursuit carried on by the natives with an industry and on a scale almost unexampled, yet in a mode very different from that of the great European nations. It is conducted, not on the open sea amid tempest and peril, and with a large capital invested in distant voyages, but by numerous individuals in the lowest ranks, whose boats are their only abode, and who spend their lives and find their support upon the waters.† They venture not among troubled waves, but cover with their little skiffs all the lakes, sheltered bays, and still rivers, from one end of the empire to the other, forming as it were a nation by themselves. A missionary has not hesitated to assert, that the fishery on the Yang-tse-kiang is equal to that on all the rivers of Europe united.‡ In the approach to Canton by the Bocca Tigris, these boats are ranged in long rows, leaving intervals like streets for the large ships to pass through. The lake of Wee-tchang, as seen from the Great Canal, presented a delightful spectacle, owing to the numberless vessels on its surface, which were variously moved by sails, oars, paddles, poles, and every suitable implement. Besides nets and other customary tackle, the Chinese fisher has resources unknown among other tribes. He has the leu-tse, a species of corvorant, a flock of which issues forth from the boat in the morning; each, on discovering a fish, dives to the bottom, seizes it round the middle, and,

* Barrow's Travels, p. 542. † Ibid. p. 557.
‡ Mémoires, tome iv. p. 322.



Floating Islands.

though the size often renders such an exertion extraordinary, carries it to its master. According to Du Halde, a ring fastened round the throat prevents the bird from satisfying its own appetite; but those observed by Staunton seemed so well trained as to need no such precaution. Another device is to attach to the boat a floating plank painted white, which, when illumined by the moon, is mistaken for water by the fishes, who leap upon it, and are caught.* These lakes are also frequented by numerous waterfowl, the capture of which is an important object; but the people, being destitute of fire-arms, are obliged to employ various stratagems. A man will swim or wade through the water, having his head covered with a large gourd or calabash, such as the birds are accustomed to see floating on the surface; they therefore alight upon it without dread, when, through a hole previously made, the concealed assailant puts out his hand, snatches his prey, and lodges it in his basket.† On board of these boats are also kept numerous ducks, which in the morning are allowed to seek their food along the shores; but at the sound of a peculiar whistle they flock back and take their stations in the vessel. The prefixed plate, exhibiting a view of Chinese life upon the water, is a composition, the principal features of which are selected from a series of native drawings in the Company's Collection.

In China there is a remarkable deficiency of any body of moneyed men. The low state of capital and credit is indicated by the rate of interest,

* Barrow's Travels, p. 533.

† Staunton, vol. iii. p. 223. Barrow's Travels, p. 533. Du Halde, vol. ii. p. 237.

which, legally, is no less than thirty per cent. per annum, though in practice the rate at Canton varies from 12 to 18 per cent.* This, in a country so long and industriously improved, seems to confirm the suspicion as to the insecure tenure by which property continues to be held. Loans are chiefly made in small sums, and by pawnbrokers, who are numerous in all the cities. Timkowski states, that in Pe-king advances are made to the amount of three-tenths of the value, and that the rate of interest is two per cent. a-month for clothes, and three per cent. for metal and ornaments; this distinction being made on account of the greater facility with which the former are disposed of. In that capital, also, advances on high terms are made on the credit of income possessed or expected; and there is said to be no city where a man may be more readily supplied with the means of ruining himself.†

The money of China does not consist in any degree of gold, which is used only for purposes of ornament. Silver is the standard medium of exchange; yet it is not coined, but issued in pieces, which are weighed very dexterously in small scales kept for the purpose. If a piece be too large for the payment intended, a portion is cut off. Accounts are kept in ounces of silver, called by the Chinese *leang*, but by Europeans, after the example of the Portuguese, tahels or taels. These, as has been already observed, may average about 6s. 8d. of our money. The only coin is one of very

* Barrow, in Supplement to Encyclopædia Britannica, vol. iii. p. 109. Staunton, Ta-tsing-leu-lee, pp. 158, 530.

† Staunton, vol. iii. p. 224. Timkowski, vol. i. pp. 326, 327.

small value, formed of a composition having six parts of copper and four of lead. It is of a round shape, and the pieces are strung upon a cord, with a knot distinguishing every hundred. Du Halde reckons 600 to a tael; but, according to Mr M'Culloch, there are at least 750, which would make each about the tenth part of a penny sterling. The impression, which is only on one side, consists in pompous titles of the reigning emperor. There is a tradition that coins of gold, silver, and even earth, were formerly used; but all these are now superseded. The Emperor Hong-vou attempted to issue a paper currency, each note of which passed for a tael. It was stamped with the imperial seal, and bore an inscription that he who should counterfeit it would be beheaded. Being revived under the posterity of Zingis, it was found current by Marco Polo at the time of his visit, but is now entirely disused; specimens of it being only sought for as curiosities, or to be used superstitiously as amulets.

CHAPTER V.

Social State—Manners—Arts.

Population—Various Estimates—External Appearance of the Chinese—Social Intercourse—Its limited Extent—Domestic Life—Meetings of Kindred—Filial Piety—Degradation of the Female Sex—Their Education—Seclusion—Ornament of their Persons—Cramping of the Feet—Courtship—Marriage—Treatment of the Wife—Domestic Discord—Influence of Mothers—Number of Wives—Attachment between Brothers—Funeral Ceremonies—Reverence to deceased Relations—Festivals—New Year—Of Lanterns—Birthdays—Chinese Character—General Diffusion of Knowledge—Orderly Behaviour—Courtesy—Industry—Want of general Benevolence—Infanticide—Suicide—National Pride—Superstition—Village Life—Architecture—Furniture—Gardening—Painting—Music—Dress—Food—Entertainments.

In surveying the inhabitants of this vast empire, the most striking circumstance is their number, which, at the very lowest estimate, far exceeds what is any where else united under one government. On this subject, however, we are still involved in much doubt and perplexity. There are not, indeed, wanting numerous statements, given as if drawn from official sources; but among these the discrepancies are so great as almost to drive us to the conclusion of Mr Davis, that "we are certain of nothing except our own ignorance."* We shall, however, endeavour to collect into one view the various details which have been supplied on this interesting subject, together

* Transactions of the Asiatic Society, vol. i. p. 13.

with such suggestions as may assist our readers in forming a correct judgment.

The earliest enumeration mentioned is that in the reign of Yang-ti, A. D. 609, which gave 8,900,000 families. Under Hoei-tsong, in 1122, a census was taken, of 20,882,000 families, from which was inferred the very inadequate number of 46,734,000 individuals. In 1290, when Kublai Khan was on the throne, 13,196,000 were said to be subject to a poll-tax, levied on the heads of families. In the time of Hiao-tsong, in 1502, there were understood to be 53,280,000 mouths. A return, probably made about the accession of the Tartar dynasty, A. D. 1644, gave the very reduced amount of 27,241,000.* These numbers, it is obvious, are not deserving of much consideration. They were mostly taken during disturbed periods, when the empire was only imperfectly reduced under the sway of a single monarch; and always, we believe, with a view to the tax above mentioned, from which the revenue was then chiefly derived. Under the reign of Yong-tching, the *jin-ting*, as this impost was called, was exchanged for the *ty-ting*, or one on land and labour, which, of course, could not be so easily evaded; and since that period, the boastful disposition, both of the general and local rulers, has apparently led them to exaggerate rather than to diminish the returns of the population.

In 1777, Amiot, who had resided long, and enjoyed no small favour at the court of Pe-king, formed an estimate seemingly collected from authentic materials. He found an official statement, in which the number of tax-paying individuals in

* Barrow, in Supplement to Encyclopædia Britannica, vol. iii. p. 102. Morrison's View of China, p. 61-71.

1743 amounted to twenty-eight millions and a half. Allowing five to a family, though the Chinese reckon six, he obtained upwards of 142 millions. To this were to be added, not only the military, but sundry other classes, who, from various causes, escape contribution,—mandarins, monks, literati, robbers, vagabonds, and those who have no abode but upon the water,—and, including these, he seems justified in raising the amount to 150,000,000. There are, besides, all those individuals who do not produce any commodity liable to duty; among whom, we suspect, he erroneously comprehends the manufacturers of silk and other fabrics, who, as we think has been clearly shown, pay in kind a proportion of their respective goods. There remain, therefore, only the shopkeepers and hired labourers, the latter of whom are not nearly so numerous as in Europe. Yet we are not disinclined to admit that these two may amount to thirty or forty millions, and thus raise the total to nearly 200 millions.*

In the twenty-sixth year of Kien-long (1761), Father Allerstain translated from a manuscript, found in the Chinese board of taxes, the return of a census which made the population amount to 198,214,624,—a result nearly coinciding with that given by Amiot.†

In 1793, Lord Macartney received from Chow-ta-zhin, the mandarin who attended him, whom we have seen described as an intelligent and respectable person, "a man of business and precision," a statement taken from one of the public offices in the capital; according to which the population of the

* Mémoires, tome vi. p. 275-292.
† Ibid. p. 292.

empire amounted to 333,000,000.* This report being conveyed to Europe, caused the deepest sensation; it appeared amazing that such a mass of human beings should be united under one government; and a peculiar interest has ever since attached to the subject.

The members of Lord Amherst's embassy, in 1816, did not obtain any official intelligence; but their own impression, and the one which they found prevailing at Canton, was, that the estimate just mentioned was considerably exaggerated, and that more reliance was due to the calculations of Amiot and Allerstain.† In 1817, a still lower computation was advanced by Dr Morrison, whose profound acquaintance with the Chinese language gave it great weight. It was taken from an official work, entitled, "A Complete Statistical Account of the Empire of Ta-ts'hing," and was published towards the end of the reign of Kien-long, or about 1790. According to it, the population fell short of 143 millions, and allowing two more for the army and civil service, and the same number for dwellers on the water, the whole would not amount to 150 millions. This estimate, approved by Mr Thoms,‡ was adopted by Klaproth, and for some time became the received opinion in Europe, though we confess it always appeared to ourselves to be underrated.

At present the inhabitants of China are believed to be much more numerous. Mr John Robert Morrison, son of the Doctor, has given in the Companion to the Anglo-Chinese Calendar for 1832 the

* Staunton, vol. iii. pp. 388, 467. † Abel, p. 204.
‡ Chinese Courtship, p. 323. Morrison's View, p. 61-71.

result of a census taken in 1813, and drawn from a work published by imperial authority, which assigns the enormous amount of 360,443,000. This statement is brought forward with a view to set at rest the various speculations which have been entertained on the subject.* It has been pretty generally so received in our own country; and a friend, for whose opinion we feel the greatest deference, views it in the same light. Yet we really can discover no superiority it possesses over the former enumerations, which were all in like manner stated to have been derived from official sources. Comparing it with the one immediately prior, there appears, not only such a vast difference in the general amount, but such a discrepancy in the details, as, we own, completely shakes our faith in any thing like a Chinese census. Thus, according to Dr Morrison, Peche-lee contained 3,504,000; according to his son, 27,990,000; Gan-hwuy is changed from 1,438,000 to 34,168,000; Kan-su, from 340,000 to 15,193,000; Shan-see, from 1,860,000 to 14,004,000; Shen-see, from 257,000 to 10,207,000. It has been suggested, that the population may have been in a state of rapid increase; and as the empire has enjoyed long repose, this may be true to a certain extent; but when we consider the dense and crowded state in which it was at the first period, and that the means of subsistence have not been materially enlarged, there is little room for supposing that population can have made such an immense progress. Besides, contemporaneous with the first of these enumerations, taken in 1790, was that communicated to Lord

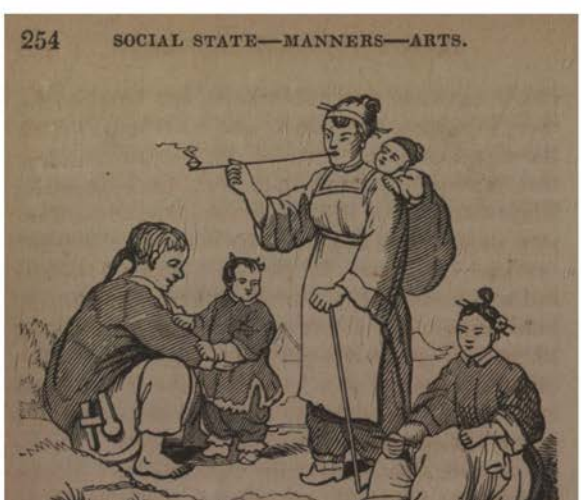
* Gutzlaff's Journal, Introduction, p. 23-25.

Macartney, in which the amount is nearly as large as in the recent one, showing that such discordant statements have all along been afloat.

Amid these discrepancies, we confess ourselves disposed, as a rude approximation, to adhere to the account given by Amiot, with a moderate allowance for that augmentation which has probably taken place during a century of profound peace. Under these views, we should be inclined to fix the population somewhere between two and three hundred millions.

In the absence of any census upon which greater reliance can be placed, the following estimate from analogy, however loose, may be thought deserving of some consideration. There is probably no part of the world which so nearly resembles the Chinese dominions in fertility, cultivation, and social state, as that section of Hindostan which is included in the presidency of Bengal. We shall deal, it may be presumed, rather favourably with China, if, excluding the mountain-territory recently ceded by Nepaul, we consider its population to be similar in point of density with that of this territory. Even here, indeed, much uncertainty prevails; yet Mr Hamilton has formed a very careful estimate, which Mr M'Culloch regards as not far from the truth. He allows to this region 328,000 square miles, and 57,500,000 inhabitants. If, following Sir George Staunton, we take the area of the empire in round numbers at 1,300,000 square miles,* and extend to it this rate of population, we shall obtain nearly 228,000,000. Between this and the conjecture

* East India Gazetteer, 2d edition (2 vols 8vo), vol. i. p. 656. Commercial Dictionary, 2d edition, p. 546.



Group of Chinese.

formed above, upon other grounds, there is a degree of coincidence which perhaps may afford some confirmation to both.

The external form of the natives is marked by peculiarities which have become familiar to us by the paintings on their porcelain; yet both Le Comte and Du Halde assure us, that they are by no means so deformed as their cups and saucers would indicate. This arises from the great imperfection in the drawing of the human figure, with which their artists are justly charged. The leading characteristics, however, are a broad flat face, with pointed chin, giving to the head the appearance of an inverted cone; high cheekbones; eyes small, distant from each other, in an oblique position, depressed towards the nose, the corner next which resembles the

end of an ellipse; nose short, low, and broad at the root; ears large and broad; and black hair. With the exception of this covering, Mr Barrow considers them as bearing a great similarity to the Hottentots. Their features also much resemble those of the Tartars, though their form is taller and more slender.*

Social intercourse in China is confined within much narrower limits than in Europe; centring almost entirely in the relations which subsist between the governors and the governed, and between the different members of a family. None of those ties exist, by which a private individual becomes connected with an extensive circle of acquaintances. There are no guilds or corporations exercising a common jurisdiction, or having general concerns on which to deliberate. No great companies unite in carrying on moneyed or mercantile transactions, the pursuits of industry being in almost every instance conducted by detached individuals, each with his own funds and on his own plan. There are no political associations, except a few that are secret, proscribed, and formed for desperate purposes; indeed, among the great body of the people, there is not enough of public feeling to give rise to those combinations which we call parties. Societies for philanthropic objects, or for the investigation of science, are equally unknown. Even clubs, or large assemblies for amusement, are contrary to the national maxims, and would be viewed with jealousy by the government. It is in the interior of their houses alone that opulent individuals seek to enjoy pleasure and live in state. The learned professions, which form so large a proportion of European society, scarcely exist in China.

* Barrow's Travels, pp. 49, 183. Du Halde, vol. ii. pp. 137, 138.

There is no such character as a practising lawyer, any aid given to the suitor by intelligent friends being a spontaneous act of kindness.* The priests or bonzes, both of Tao-tse and Fo, are mostly immured in convents, and never appear in public but under a very humble guise. Medicine, again, is held in little estimation, and mixed with many superstitious observances.† The men of letters who have risen to eminence are all officers of state, and, in their successive grades, belong at once to the ruling order and the ruled. The disappointed, or unemployed members of this body, who live either in poverty, or undertake the office of schoolmaster, occupy more nearly perhaps the situation of the middling classes in Europe than any other portion of Chinese society.‡

The domestic duties, and in an especial manner filial piety, are inculcated by this people as the basis of their moral and political system; and it is, in fact, as the general father of his subjects, that the emperor claims their implicit obedience. Hence any neglect, or breach of duty, is viewed as disturbing the order of the state, and punished as treason. Its obligations form the chief burden of the Li-ki, or grand book of manners and ceremonies, by which they profess to be regulated. These also constitute the sole theme of the Hiao-king, which, as its title imports, ranks with the most ancient of their literary works, and is frequently ascribed to Confucius.§ In every ethical treatise this virtue holds the most prominent place, and is even represented as including every other. To a truly dutiful son, the most powerful dissuasive

* Staunton, vol. iii. p. 329.
† Ibid. p. 375.
‡ Mémoires, tome iv. p. 33.
§ Ibid. p. 1-28.

from ill conduct, and its heaviest aggravation, are the distress and dishonour which it would bring on a revered parent.

Families, as they branch out and become a kindred, compose communities subject to a patriarchal jurisdiction, which, amid the proscription of every other bond of union, are cherished by the supreme government. It is usual for sons, even after they have wives and families, to remain under the paternal roof, till increasing numbers render this arrangement inconvenient or impracticable; and moralists still celebrate the period when this cohabitation existed on a much larger scale than at present. One case is mentioned, where nine generations (by which, we suppose, are meant families) lived under the same roof; and another household, where dinner was daily cooked for seven hundred persons.* In these united families, a community of goods appears to be established, the produce of the labour of all being thrown into a general stock, and administered by the head of the clan. But, in later times, it has been found very difficult to preserve harmony among such numerous households. Complaints are first whispered, then openly uttered, that the common concerns are not properly conducted, that some expend more than others, and threaten to involve the whole establishment in distress. It is therefore recommended, in a modern work, that fathers should begin by giving to their sons a small allowance to manage for themselves; and that when they reach mature age, and have families, they should permit them to form a distinct establishment.† Even after

* Staunton, Miscellaneous Notices, p. 10.
† Du Halde, vol. iii. p. 324.

this separation, periodical meetings of kindred are held on solemn occasions. These, too, appear to have been much more frequent in ancient times, taking place regularly on the 10th and 26th of every month. Ouang-mong, an early moralist, in laying down rules for their regulation, gives a somewhat pleasing picture of the manner in which they were conducted. Under the direction of the father, or head of the house, a youth, with a clear and audible voice, read to the assembled company, who were ranged in long rows on mats upon the floor, some instructive passage out of their sacred books. Tea was then liberally served, with some other refreshments, but no intoxicating liquor. Inquiry was next made if any disputes had arisen among those present, and every exertion was used to adjust them, without a recurrence to the scandalous and perhaps ruinous remedy of the law. It was likewise asked if any were in circumstances of distress or difficulty; and on the facts being stated, a consultation was held as to the best means of affording relief. The writer displays his loyalty by recommending that the question should be put, if all had made payment of their taxes; and if circumstances had in any instance prevented it, that every obstacle if possible should be removed.* Such meetings are now held only on certain annual festivals, particularly those in honour of ancestors, or on some special occasions; but the patriarch of every family is still viewed with high respect, and commands a considerable measure of obedience.

The Li-ki, and other ancient books, place scarcely any bounds to the veneration due from the child

* Mémoires, tome iv. p. 212, &c.

to the parent. "O, immensity of filial piety!" exclaims Tseng-tsee, "how admirable art thou! What the regularity of the movement of the stars is to the firmament, and the fertility of the soil to the earth, filial piety is to the people."* It is inculcated, that the son, while the parents live, ought to consider nothing as his own; his labour, his skill, his ingenuity, ought to be all exerted to procure for them the utmost possible comfort. If fortune or talent raise him to greatness, the best of every thing he possesses ought to be bestowed upon them. As the infirmities of age steal on, his cares should be redoubled to sooth their decline and to afford every relief in his power. While they live he never wears full mourning, and after their death he ought never to appear in gay or showy vestments.† When that period arrives he gives unrestrained vent to his grief, probably, in many cases, affecting more than he really feels. Custom, moreover, imposes upon him the necessity of suspending for three years the duties or pursuits of public life, and devoting himself entirely to solitude and mourning; and though this must to many be a severe privation, it can scarcely in any instance be dispensed with.‡ During this period he ought, according to ancient precept, to live in a thatched shed close to the grave, to sleep on leaves, and have nothing more than a clod for his pillow.§ The honours paid to the memory of ancestors will be afterwards noticed; it may, in the mean time, be mentioned here as a striking proof of good sense, that in the case of parents, as of rulers, this devoted reverence is

* Mémoires, tome iv. p. 36. † Ibid. pp. 9, 18, 35.
‡ Le Comte, vol. ii. pp. 29, 30. Du Halde, vol. ii. p. 212.
§ Morrison's Dictionary, vol. i. p. 215.

not required to be accompanied with blindness to their faults; on the contrary, it is pronounced imperative on a son, when he sees his father indulge in any culpable line of conduct, to address to him a solemn remonstrance. This, indeed, ought to be done with downcast eyes, a low voice, and in the most modest, tender, and respectful manner; but though it should be resented, even with blows, the youth is exhorted to persevere till there ceases to be any hope of success. He must then refrain, and show afterwards, in his general conduct, no abatement, but rather an increase of respect and attention.*

The sentiments of filial tenderness are expressed with considerable interest in the following lamentation of a daughter on the occasion of her mother's decease:—

"Alas! alas! the tender name of mother is now only a name of grief to me! Oh, my mother, my tender mother, you are no more! (*The chorus throughout.*)

"I owe to you life and all that I am. You nursed me; you took care of me in early childhood; you supported my first steps. Oh, my mother! one of my smiles soothed you under all the cares that my rearing cost you. Oh, cares! Oh, tenderness! Continual cares! Tenderness more elevated than the heavens, and more vast than the earth!—Oh, my mother! &c.

"Happy the time when I wore no ornaments but of your choice! Alas! to adorn my head with flowers was your sweetest amusement. With what address did you teach me the precepts of wisdom and vir-

* Mémoires, tome iv. p. 18.

tue which adorned your life! Marriage took me far from you; but what joy when I returned to see you!—Oh, my mother! &c.

"What caresses you bestowed on me!—what charming conversations! My whole soul was poured into yours! Oh, best of mothers!—you have abandoned your daughters! Father, brothers, sisters, relations, friends, neighbours,—all are in grief,—all shed tears. I hear only sighs; all that I see pierces my heart!—Oh, my mother! &c.

"I find you only in my heart. Alas! it was you that taught it to love! It was wholly yours! Look at my tears and grief! Where are you, my mother? —where are you? To come to the house and not to find you,—what a thought!"* &c.

Considering the importance attached to domestic life, and its corresponding duties, it is impossible without concern to observe the low estimation in which that sex is held who form its chief ornament, and on whom, as it were, its foundation rests. That woman exists only for the convenience of man, and scarcely shares the same nature, is an idea which has taken deep root in the minds of the Chinese. They find even in their fantastic cosmogony an illusory confirmation of this doctrine. As the *Yang*, which composes the highest heaven, is masculine, while the *Yin*, of which the earth chiefly consists, is feminine, they infer, that man is as much above woman as heaven is above the earth.† Confucius speaks of women and slaves as on a level, and complains of a similar difficulty in managing both. An accomplished youth, the hero of a popular novel, is made to express the

* Mémoires, tome iv. pp. 192, 193.
† Morrison's Dictionary, vol. i. p. 602.

opinion, that ten daughters do not in any case equal in value one son.* Even the celebrated female writer, Pan-hoei-pan, strongly inculcates on her sex their own inferiority, observing that they hold the lowest rank in the human species, and that the least exalted functions ought to be, and in fact are, assigned to them.†

A girl from the moment of her birth experiences the sinister influence of these maxims. Whenever a supposed necessity impels parents to the crime of infanticide, a daughter is selected as the victim; and those who escape this fate are by no means treated with the tenderness shown to male children. Dr Morrison makes a curious quotation from a native work, which seems accurately to describe the different treatment of the two sexes.

"When a son is born,
He sleeps on a bed,
He is clothed in robes,
He plays with gems,
His cry is princely loud,—
But when a daughter is born,
She sleeps on the ground,
She is clothed with a wrapper,
She plays with a tile,
She is incapable either of evil or good;
It is hers only to think of preparing wine and food,
And not giving any occasion of grief to her parents."‡

Even Pan-hoei-pan refers to an ancient custom, that when a female infant was born, she was left for three days upon some rags on the floor, and the family went on without taking the slightest notice that any new event had occurred. After that period some slight ceremonies and rejoicings

* Rémusat, Iu-kiao-li, vol. ii. p. 50.
† Mémoires, tome iii. p. 368.
‡ Morrison's Dictionary, vol. i. p. 601.

took place. This is applauded as a useful warning to woman, indicating the contempt which she must expect to meet with through life. "Fathers and mothers," says this writer, "seem to have eyes only for their sons; their daughters they scarce deign to look upon."*

The education of beings having such an humble destination must of course be very limited. The first principles of morality, with skill to perform the necessary household tasks, ought, according to the soundest ethical writers, to comprise the whole circle of their studies. One author, indeed, referring to the frequent complaint of the husband, that he finds very little gratification in the society of a partner whose mental resources are so small, seems to advise that he should teach her something, and encourages him by the remark, that even monkeys can be taught to play antics; but in this instruction nothing intellectual can be intended, since he concurs with other moralists in declaring that she ought never to open a book. It must at the same time be remarked, that several females who have obtained high literary eminence, and bequeathed learned works to posterity, particularly Pan-hoei-pan herself, are held by the people in peculiar esteem.† Nay, in two of the most popular novels, the heroines are represented as having reached great distinction by their wit and learning, and thus rendered themselves objects of general admiration. One of them composes a piece of poetry, which is published with a notice, that the youth who shall produce a corresponding one to the same rhymes will be honoured with her hand. This step, extraordinary as

* Mémoires, tome iii. pp. 369, 372. † Ibid. p. 385.

it may appear to us, is highly approved as a most happy mode of finding a husband of congenial character.* To account for such anomalies must, to a foreign writer, be very difficult; and we shall only observe, that, amid the varied impulses that sway the human mind, similar contradictions are not very unusual. In China, for instance, as in ancient Rome, while celibacy is generally held in disgrace, peculiar honours are nevertheless rendered to the few who voluntarily embrace that state, and strictly fulfil its duties.

As soon as a young lady has reached the age of ten or twelve, she is, in all families of any rank, placed in a state of the strictest seclusion. Her chamber from this time must be her sole abode; her mother and a few female friends her only society; and, with the exception of her nearest relations, she ought never to be seen by an individual of the other sex. Once to have been beheld by a youthful admirer, is considered an indelible blot on her reputation.† A company of ladies, when in motion, are described as resembling a procession of nuns.‡ The custom of covering the face does not indeed prevail as in Mohammedan countries; but a peculiar reserve appears to be felt with regard to the hands, which are carefully concealed from view by sleeves of extraordinary length. Mencius, the philosopher, while inculcating the strict separation to be maintained between the sexes, was pressed with the question, whether, if he saw his sister-in-law drowning, he would not take hold of her hand

* Davis' Fortunate Union, vol. i. Remusat, Iu-kiao-li, vol. ii. p. 91.

† Mémoires, tome iv. p. 179. Iu-kiao-li, vol. i. p. 242.

‡ Le Comte, vol. i. p. 179.

in order to save her? His answer was, that in such an emergency the principle of decorum might be violated; but that a general rule should not be tried by so extreme a case.* It appears, however, that the fair inmates of the domestic prison are not without expedients to enliven its solitude. Sometimes two mirrors skilfully placed, one facing the door, will enable them to observe all who enter or go out, without the hazard of being themselves perceived. A class of females go from house to house to amuse them, by the recitation of songs and tales. They announce their approach by a little drum, when they are admitted into the outer hall, and soon find their way into the inner apartments. Ladies claim also the privilege of going to burn perfumes in the pagodas, when occasions must occur of seeing, and perhaps of being seen; nor do they hesitate to take the air in covered barks upon the water. Even when plays are acted in the great hall, many do not scruple to place themselves behind a lattice, where there are not wanting crevices, through which may be descried some portion of their persons; and occasional bursts of laughter attract all eyes towards that quarter. This, however, is by strict moralists decidedly condemned, and considered as the mark of a degenerate age.†

Another circumstance in which Chinese writers generally concur is, that this seclusion from the world does not in any degree abate the zeal of the fair for the embellishment of their persons, to which they devote a large portion of their leisure. Their ideas of loveliness are peculiar, and often fantastic, and they hold in the very highest estimation a delicate

* Collie's Four Books, p. 105.
† Du Halde, vol. iii. pp. 354, 355.

and slender form. This appears above all in their endeavours to reduce the foot to a preternatural smallness,—an effect procured by checking its growth in the natural direction. From the period of birth, all the toes, except the great one, are doubled down beneath the sole, so that at the age of maturity the whole fore-part of the foot appears as if amputated, while the remaining portion is swelled to an unnatural bulk. Mothers, who are so careless in every other point relating to their daughters, bestow extreme diligence in bandaging, and guarding against every attempt which the child might make to relieve herself from this painful pressure. As soon, however, as the latter is able to comprehend the vast importance of the object, the martyrdom necessary for attaining it is cheerfully submitted to. These deformed parts are termed "the golden lilies;" and if a lady ever breaks through the prohibition against displaying her person, she presents her feet as the surest darts with which a lover's heart can be assailed. They indicate, moreover, the rank of her who completely undergoes this mutilation; for it is not attempted at all by the labouring class, and by others who have not an entire command of time the effort could only be crowned with imperfect success.

Some have ascribed this preposterous custom to the jealousy of the men, who thereby seek to check that propensity to gadding abroad to which the sex is represented as prone; but there seems little ground for this conjecture; the laws, which deal often with much smaller matters, are silent with regard to this usage, and leave it entirely under the sway of fashion. It does not, in fact, pre-

vent motion, and that even with some degree of speed. Le Comte assures us, "walk they do, and would walk all day long, with their good will." The slender base upon which they move, however, renders it impossible that "grace should be in their steps," and allows only a hobbling and tottering gait, which has been compared to the waddling of a Muscovy duck. Another tradition, which refers the origin of this custom to the example of a celebrated imperial beauty, though not fully authenticated, seems rather more accordant with the usual march of fashion.* To the means of embellishment we may add that of painting the face; for, though the author just quoted questions whether the practice be general, there is no doubt that it prevails to a great extent, rouge being mentioned among the customary presents made to a young lady on her marriage.† Extreme delicacy appears to enter into the Chinese idea of a perfect beauty. The heroine of the "Fortunate Union" is compared to a web of the finest silk; her waist, it is said, "like a thread in fineness, seemed ready to break."‡

Though young women are secluded from the world, it is deemed right to inform them that their characters, nevertheless, may be perfectly known; and that no one can expect to be married unless she has the reputation of possessing such qualities as will make her a good wife. With this view, they are told that they ought to be quiet, industrious, timid, and constantly by the side of their mothers. To speak loud is, in a young lady, to speak ill. "What

* Staunton, vol. ii. pp. 45, 47. Le Comte, vol. i. p. 180. Barrow's Travels, p. 73.

† Morrison, vol. i. p. 640. See also Ellis' Embassy.

‡ Fortunate Union, vol. i. pp. 50, 119.

a fine hope for a family," exclaims a moralist, "is a maiden with lips of carmine and cheeks of paint! The more she strives to make herself an idol, the less will she be worshipped. If she laughs before speaking, walks languishingly, and gives herself affected airs, she is fit only for the theatre." He thinks it necessary also to insinuate, that in vain will the roses of her lips and the lilies of her complexion eclipse the lustre of the morning and of spring, if the fire of anger mount up and inflame her eyes.*

When a youth has reached the age of sixteen or seventeen, and a maiden that of fourteen or fifteen, an anxious task devolves on the parents. They must, with the least possible delay, find for each a suitable helpmate; for marriage and offspring are the two points on which, according to Chinese notions, all well-being hinges.† We find accordingly, that a man who has reached, unmarried, the age of twenty, is considered almost a prodigy; while a young lady, arrived at eighteen in single blessedness, bemoans herself as in the most distressing and alarming condition.‡ Yet the affair does not in any degree rest with them; rule and custom alike inculcate that they must never have seen nor formed the slightest attachment for each other. The hero and heroine, in the "Fortunate Union," having been thrown by accident into each other's company, and conceived a mutual regard, consider this an insuperable bar to their happiness. Even when it is afterwards pressed upon them from the regular quar-

* Mémoires, tome iv. p. 178-180.

† Du Halde, vol. iii. p. 342. Rémusat, Pref. Iu-kiao-li, vol. i. p. 33-35.

‡ Fortunate Union, vol. i. p. 4.

ter, nothing, they think, can ever relieve them from the reproach of being supposed to have contracted a marriage of inclination. The gentleman is quite decided upon this point; and even when the other party, under a peculiar pressure of circumstances, allows a formal consent to be wrung from her, she cherishes the proud confidence, that her lover's rejection will secure her against the fulfilment of so disgraceful an engagement.* According to the strict doctrine of the Li-ki, the two ought not even to know each other's names till the formal agreement is made; yet the general course of the narratives gives little ground for concluding that this injunction is every where strictly fulfilled. It appears, on the contrary, that intimate communings are held between the parents, and that close interrogatories are put on the subject by the two individuals whom it most nearly concerns.

The young man's father is the person with whom the proposition usually originates; yet instances occur in which the overture is made on the lady's side, without any feeling that such a step is improper.† But even the parents must not treat directly with each other: this would be almost as irregular as if the young persons themselves did so. They seek out an elderly lady, who practises as a regular negotiator in matrimonial matters. To be busy in match-making is considered in our country rather a reproach; but the profession in China is openly avowed, and held as quite respectable.‡ This personage makes the proposition to the young lady's

* Fortunate Union, vol. i. p. 216; vol. ii. p. 101-110.

† Iu-kiao-li, vol. i. p. 232.

‡ Morrison's Dictionary, vol. i. p. 607. Iu-kiao-li, vol. i. p. 230.

father, enforcing it by such arguments as appear most likely to be persuasive; upon which he takes the subject into consideration, and if the match is deemed desirable, a virtual consent is given by the delivery of her eight letters, which express the year, month, day, and hour of her nativity. These are to be placed in the hands of the astrologer, who, after comparing them with the aspect of the heavenly bodies and the koua, pronounces whether or not the union would be fortunate. This learned individual, it is obvious, possesses a negative on the whole transaction; and complaints are made that this power has been repeatedly exercised to the detriment of the parties. We, however, should suspect that the soothsayer, deriving his subsistence from the bounty of his employers, will be cautious of finding in the stars obstacles to a marriage which is earnestly desired by a good customer. The old lady, having received from him a favourable report, triumphantly produces it to the parents of the bride, considering herself then entitled to demand from them a written promise of marriage. This being obtained, the youth's father sends the presents, which include usually a sum of money so considerable, as to convert the betrothment into a species of purchase. Nothing now remains but to fix a day for the celebration.

Marriage is one of the few occasions when the Chinese, departing from their usual quiet habits, exert every effort to make a dazzling display. In aid of this object, presents are poured in by the neighbours. To the bridegroom's father are sent tablets, geese, wine, and other materials of good cheer. The bride receives pins, bracelets, rouge, and cosmetics. When the important hour arrives, the lady

enters a splendid sedan-chair, or rather pavilion, while numerous attendants, some bearing her clothes and ornaments, others displaying flags and costly lanterns, while a third party are performing on musical instruments, fill the street, and attract a crowd of spectators. On their arrival at the house, the bridegroom, who waits at the door richly attired, opens the chair, and beholds for the first time her who is to be his companion for life. Not a few, it is said, misled by flattering reports, are struck with dismay at the sight, and the moment which is hailed with so much joy by all around is to them one of deep distress. Some, it is added, even shut the door and insist upon the bride being carried back, willing to forfeit all the expenses of courtship. In ordinary cases, the lady having been borne by two of her maids over a dish of fire placed at the door, she and the bridegroom proceed to an inner apartment, where they make four bows, and mutually pledge each other in three cups. This is considered as constituting the essential part of the marriage-ceremony; and the couple are now irrevocably united. They then go out and join their friends, who spend the evening in celebrating the joyful occasion.*

This mode of conducting marriage affords an obvious opportunity for deception; it being perfectly possible that, by the use of a false name, a man may find himself united to an entirely different person from the one he had expected. Such frauds are not unfrequently introduced into Chinese novels, and even the law takes cognizance of them, award-

* Morrison's Dictionary, vol. i. p. 639, &c. Du Halde, vol. ii. p. 203-207; vol. iii. p. 340. Le Comte, vol. ii. pp. 66, 67. Fortunate Union, vol. ii. p. 130.

ing eighty strokes of the bamboo to the parent or guardian who countenanced the deceit, but exempting the parties themselves, who cannot be supposed to have had any concern in the affair. In the same manner, if there has been in the union any thing irregular, the punishment falls upon those who brought it about, not upon those between whom it was formed.

The young wife, we are told, soon finds her situation far from being improved by having quitted the paternal roof. The degree of thraldom in which she was there held was liberty itself when compared with the house of bondage into which she now enters. She is bound to render unqualified submission to one who views her as unfit to be a rational companion, and scarcely belonging to the same species with himself. The fair Pan-hoei-pan instructs her sex, that they owe to their husbands an obedience, without "exception of times or circumstances, extending to, and exercised upon every thing. Be he agreeable or disagreeable, he is her chief, her master, her companion, her only one, her all."* This subjection, however, might be felt as in some degree natural, and probably tempered with the exercise of affection; but there is another yoke which presses still heavier, and is harder to be borne. The mother-in-law, so long as she lives, is complete mistress of the house,—entitled to treat the young wife as a servant, and even as a slave. The Li-ki expressly states, that a daughter-in-law can have nothing personally belonging to her; nothing which she is entitled to give or even to lend; whatever she receives as a present must be

* Mémoires, tome iii. p. 330.

taken to her mother-in-law, when, if not accepted, it may be modestly received from her as a gift. That lady, if every thing commanded by her be not strictly fulfilled, may both inflict chastisement herself, and command her son to follow the example. Even the sister-in-law assumes airs of superiority over this new inmate, who, according to an author quoted with applause by Pan-hoei-pan, ought to be "nothing in the house beyond a pure shadow and a simple echo."* According to a maxim of high authority, it is better to make a wife weep a hundred times than a mother sigh once.† A friendly moralist remarks, that it is hard for female pride thus to bend beneath one, and yield precedence to another, of her nearest relations.‡ The series of miseries which the sex endures are forcibly depicted in the following poem:—

"What a dismal condition is that of a woman! her lot is in the hands of the husband to whom she has been given away. Scarcely is she united to him when she must foHow him as a slave does his master. Entering into his family she loses her own. So bitter a separation pierces her heart; her eyes become fountains of tears. She receives her mother's last adieu without hearing it from the excess of her grief, and no one sympathizes with her. Even her brothers and sisters return none of her sighs; while she beats her breast in the magnificent chair where they have shut her up, instruments of joy resound on every side. Her forehead is adorned with jewels and flowers; her ears are loaded with pearls; gold and embroidery shine in her dress: this is the

* Mémoires, tome iii. p. 381. † Ibid. tome iv. p. 272.
‡ Ibid. pp. 17, 19, 179.

last effort of her parents' tenderness. The porch of her husband's mansion is adorned with silk flags and garlands of flowers, yet within she often finds only poverty and indigence. I found worse, poverty and pride; a sour stepmother, an infirm father-in-law, seemed to contrive how they might make me feel that I was come only to serve them; while their daughter, seated like an invited guest, spent the day in preparing and putting on her dress. The lowest household labour made the sweat flow from my forehead. I was obliged to rise before morning; and when night had extended her deepest veil, the hour of rest for me was not yet come.

"I became a mother; this was a new weight added to my yoke of iron. If I watered with my tears the countenance of my child, I was unwilling to afflict my husband, and concealed them before him. My children increased my trouble; they were frozen with cold, and I had nothing to cover them; they cried to me for *Bread!* they disputed for my breasts, and found them dry. How often have I taken up a cord to end my sorrows. Oh, my son! oh, my daughter! my tenderness for you made it fall from my hands, and the idea of leaving you orphans appeared more frightful than all my griefs. How little did it cost me to cut my long hair and sell it to relieve you! I would have sold myself had it been possible!"*

A moral writer describes with tenderness the situation of a young married woman, removed to a distance from her parents' house, where all her happiness is still centred. "When the birthday of her relations, or one of the annual rejoicing-days, shall

* Mémoires, tome iv. p. 186-188.

arrive, when the whole family meet together at her father's house to pass the day in mirth and jollity, she will be quite disconsolate that she cannot be in the same company; her eyes cannot meet those of her mother; think, then, how great must her uneasiness be." Even when allowed to pay a short visit, "in the melancholy moment of separation, her very soul is wrested from her body; on the road she turns her head every moment towards the place she is quitting, and where she has left her dear relations; her tenderness is renewed, and gives her an uneasiness of mind impossible to be expressed."*

It would give us satisfaction could we add, that, under those accumulated hardships, the young matrons display the patience and meekness which the precepts of their sages inculcate. But a concurrence of authorities obliges us to conclude, that a remarkable failure is too often conspicuous. The very etymology of anger, formerly referred to, intimates the belief that this passion is by no means a stranger to the female breast. Pan-hoei-pan feelingly laments how often in a newly-married woman the transition takes place from the similitude of a "timid mouse" to that of a "horrible tigress." With her usual rigour to her own sex, she imputes this change to the complaisance which the husband is apt to display during the first period of their union. Hence the lady is tempted to neglect her duties, and to indulge her humours and caprice; he then assumes an air of authority, which she repels; he has recourse to severity, which she resists; thus, by degrees, the mouse disappears, and all the tigress is developed. Strictly, and from the first, to treat the mouse as a

* Du Halde, vol. iii. p. 335.

mouse, is recommended by her as the only security against this baleful transformation.* Yet it is but just to state, that Tchoang-kia-pao, an eminent moralist of the other sex, while bewailing the dreadful scenes which thus arise in the interior of families, throws the chief blame upon the other party. "Whether," says he to the husband, "she give cause or not, you scold continually, your forehead is never smoothed, you never open your mouth but to say something harsh. This inevitably calls forth from her a similar return; and, though living under the same roof, your hearts are more distant from each other than heaven is from earth. The poison penetrates the whole soul; dislike is changed into aversion, aversion into hatred; and you become a scourge, and even a torment to each other."† It is painful to add, that the law even judges it necessary to protect the husband against being assailed with blows by his fair helpmate. If he carries her before a magistrate, and satisfactorily proves that he has sustained a severe beating, she is punished with one hundred strokes of the bamboo, and may be legally divorced. If her wrath and prowess have risen to such a pitch as to have maimed or permanently injured his person, death must expiate such an enormity.‡

One might suppose that the gentleman has otherwise sufficient means of defending himself against such assaults from the weaker vessel. Not only can he with impunity inflict upon her any chastisement short of maiming or mutilation, but the law grants to him besides an almost unlimited liberty of divorce. There are, indeed, certain legal grounds

* Mémoires, tome iii. p. 373. † Ibid. tome iv. p. 207.
‡ Morrison's Dictionary, vol. i. p. 618.

on which the dismissal of a wife must be founded, and without which the simple attempt is punished with eighty blows; but these are so numerous, including not only an envious and suspicious temper, but even *talkativeness*, that the husband can seldom want a pretext for ridding himself of a hated partner. As she cannot, however, be absolutely thrown upon the world, if there are no friends willing to receive her, she is sent to a dark chamber in a remote part of the house, where she is supplied with only such a portion of food and clothing as humanity would claim for the meanest slave.* But it does not appear that this extremity is very frequently resorted to. The absolute necessity of having a wife, the expense of procuring a new one, the evils of introducing a stepmother into a family, and the reluctance to bring private affairs before a magistrate, induce the head of a house to endure much rather than break up his domestic establishment.

Beauty and talent in woman, with the attempt through them to influence public affairs, seem to be viewed by the Chinese with a peculiar and mysterious terror. This is strongly expressed in the following lines quoted by Dr Morrison :—

> " A beautiful and clever woman should be regarded
> As a hoarse and hateful bird :
> Women with long tongues
> Are stepping-stones to misery.
> State-commotions come not from heaven ;
> They are born by, and come forth from *woman*."†

It must, however, be observed, that whatever the sex may have to endure in the earlier part of life, a brilliant era is still in reserve for them. Woman, as

* Staunton, Ta-tsing-leu-lee, p. 120. Mémoires, tome iii. p. 375.
† Morrison's Dictionary, vol. i. p. 504.

a blooming bride neglected and despised, becomes, as a withered matron, the object of a veneration almost unbounded. As soon as the sons arrive at manhood, and are considered the leading persons in the family, the mother, through them, may be accounted its absolute mistress. In China, the tie by which the child is bound to the mother is peculiarly strong. Among the higher ranks, particularly, the prevalence of polygamy weakens the paternal connexion, and renders her, as it were, the only parent. The greatest mandarin accordingly lavishes upon her to whom he owes his birth the most profuse displays of his affection. Every three months he puts on his robes of state, and performs in her presence a series of humble prostrations. The court-dress which the Li-pou statutes assign to the empress-mother is more splendid than that worn either by the emperor himself or his consort. Indeed, the sovereign, as long as she lives, is hardly a free agent; and though the public annals record many calamities as having sprung from the power of favourite queens, those arising from the influence of empress-dowagers are still more frequent. We have seen this consideration operate so strongly upon one of the best monarchs, as to impel him, on electing a successor, to put the youth's mother to death.

The number of wives which a man may marry is an important point in domestic life. Of females holding the full title, character, and privileges of spouse, law and custom admit only one. But it is remarkable that in three popular novels,—the "Two Cousins," the "Shadow in the Water," and the "Twin Sisters,"—the *dénouement* is formed by the marriage of one youth, on the same day and by

the same ceremony, to two young ladies, each of whom becomes his equal wife; and hence M. Rémusat infers, that this arrangement is entirely in accordance with Chinese habits and ideas.* Yet, with every deference to so great an authority, we must observe, that not only is the character of these works somewhat low in respect to morality, but that it is impossible to peruse them without perceiving that the incident is singular, and introduced in order to give a zest to the narrative by its novelty. The parties are not able to quote more than a single precedent, and that drawn from the early records of the monarchy. The hero of the "Two Cousins," though he himself formed such a union, speaks of it previously as a thing utterly impossible;† while he of the Fortunate Union positively states, that there never had been an instance of a man of good education and principle marrying more than one full wife.‡ It is true, we must admit, that such an occurrence would not have been introduced had it been as revolting to a Chinese as it is to a British reader; but we think it evident, that the practice receives no sanction either from law or custom. These, indeed, distinctly recognise the character of second wife or concubine; which last term, in the language of the country, is oddly compounded of the two words which signify *crime* and *woman*, and yet the relation suggests no idea of guilt, nor even of absolute disgrace. Such ladies are maintained in great numbers by the sovereign and gran-

* Iu-kiao-li, Pref. vol. i. pp. 51, 52.
† Ibid. vol. iv. pp. 47, 168, 116.
‡ Fortunate Union, vol. ii. p. 148. See also Davis' Chinese Novels, p. 89-148.

dees; and to supply the inmates of their splendid mansions is the object of a traffic, of which the chief seat is the gay city of Sou-tcheou-fou. The dealers go round the country, buying up all the female children who afford any promise of beauty. They mould their feet, and as much as possible their whole person, after the fashionable form; they instruct them in music, ornamental needlework, and other arts of amusement; and thus enhance their value to such a degree that some of them have been known to bring from 450 to 600 guineas.* Yet, in regard to the great body of the people, the law, seconded by public opinion, enjoins only one wife, making no exception, unless the husband has reached the age of forty without male issue. In this case, he is considered completely justified in adding a concubine.

The relationship between brother and brother presents itself in China under a more pleasing aspect. All authorities assign a prominent place to its obligations, considering them next to those between father and son. The elder brother, in fact, is regarded as a kind of father to the younger; and the long period during which they continue to reside beneath the paternal roof, even after having families of their own, perpetuates the original connexion. This peculiar affection is pleasingly expressed in the following poetical effusion:—

"No tree can be compared to the Tchang-ti, which spring has crowned with a thousand flowers. No man can be compared to a brother. A brother weeps the death of his brother with tears of real grief. Were his body suspended over an abyss, on

* Du Halde, vol. ii. p. 208. Van Braam, vol. ii. pp. 182, 183.

the point of a rock, or sunk in the pestilential waters of a gulf, he would procure for him a tomb. The turtle mourns alone in the silence of the woods, but I, in my affliction, have a brother who partakes it. The tenderest friend seeks only to solace my grief; my brother shares it,—it is his own. Anger, indeed, may find its way into our dwelling, and its poisoned breath may enter his heart, but as soon as danger approaches, my brother shelters my body with his own. What joy to him to see me delivered! What pleasure to see me happy! Relations share our happiness; the presence of a brother augments it. The most agreeable festivals are those in which I see mine,—when he is seated by my side; his presence then expands my soul; I pour it wholly into his bosom. Fraternal love in families is what the *kin* and the *che* are in concerts, supporting and embellishing the harmony. Happy the families in which it reigns; it attracts all virtues, and banishes all vices."*

When, in spite of early marriage and concubinage, a Chinese husband sees himself in danger of dying without male issue, he has recourse to the expedient of adoption. A proper object is selected in a family whose rank corresponds to his own, but of which the circumstances are such, that the promise of inheritance may induce one of the sons to accept his offer; and when the negotiation is completed, the child becomes bound to all the duties, and entitled to all the privileges, of one born in the house.†

Death does not terminate the duties of relatives,

* Mémoires, tome iv. p. 173.

† Du Halde, vol. iii. pp. 327, 328. Rémusat, Iu-kiao-li, Pref., vol. i. p. 36.

especially of children. On the contrary, the Chinese may in some sense be said to feel more interest about themselves after their decease than during their life; yet this anxiety has no reference to their immortal part, but is confined to the honours paid to their inanimate dust. M. Rémusat conceives, that the deep apprehension under which they labour of dying without male issue, is chiefly felt because a son alone can fully pay the suitable homage to a deceased ancestor.* To be interred with splendour is one of the greatest objects of ambition with this people. When a man furnishes his house, the funeral urn or coffin is the first and most expensive article; it is made of camphor, or some other odoriferous wood, and, according to the circumstances of the owner, is richly carved, gilded, and sometimes adorned with figures. As soon as the last hour has arrived, one of the relations mounts to the roof of the house, and three times calls upon the soul of the deceased to come back and re-enter his body. Three days are allowed to answer the invitation, though Navarette says, he never heard of any instance of its being accepted. Preparations are then made for lodging the deceased in his last receptacle. He is dressed in his richest clothes; gold, gems, pearls, or, at least, rice, tea, and incense, are put into his mouth. The head is made to rest upon a pillow of cotton-wool, and all the crevices are stuffed with that substance. Then, amid loud lamentations, the body is laid in the coffin, which is placed in the middle of the principal room, covered with rich cloth, while before it is a table adorned with flowers, perfumes, and lighted wax-candles. Here-

* Rémusat, Iu-kiao-li.

on is put either a picture of the defunct, or a tablet containing his name; before which, not only the friends, but all who come on visits of condolence, perform ko-tou,—falling prostrate, and beating their foreheads against the ground. Some keep their dead relations in their houses or gardens for weeks, months, and even years, either from a feeling of reverence, or the difficulty of fixing upon an auspicious place of interment. All the resources of astrology are employed to determine this particular, which is considered as having a powerful influence on the future well-being of the family. When the person has died in a remote place, a suitable opportunity must be taken for conveying the body to his native district. A fortunate spot being at length chosen, it is carefully prepared for its solemn use. Where circumstances admit, a spacious vault is dug, over which is raised a small mound of earth surrounded with trees. These cemeteries are all without the walls of cities, where, ranged in long rows, they resemble lines of ornamented villas. The day of interment having at last come, the body is carried to the tomb with a pomp even surpassing that of the nuptial ceremony. Foremost are borne pasteboard representations of slaves, horses, money, and other objects, which, as the procession passes by certain temples, are solemnly burned, under the belief, it is said, that they will reappear with the deceased in a future state, and supply his wants. This practice was probably introduced by the priests of Fo, with whose creed it seems to accord. It is more common to exhibit a picture of the deceased, or a tablet expressing his name and qualities, accompanied by ornamented flags and standards. Then

follows the body, covered with a spacious canopy, and laid upon an extensive framework, which in some cases requires upwards of sixty bearers. Behind, in a long train, follow the various classes of mourners, among whom the females, concealed by white curtains, make known their presence only by loud lamentations. After the corpse is deposited, an entertainment is given. Grief is profusely displayed, yet in a manner so strictly according to rule and statute, as to leave a doubt with the spectator, how far it is the result of sensibility, or only dictated by decorum.*

These, however, are not the last duties performed in China to the deceased; others remain, the discharge of which constitutes the principal employment of the survivors. There is a continued resort to the tomb, to perform homage, burn perfumes and ornamented papers, and furnish a supply of victuals, which for several months must be constantly kept up. The following passage in a popular drama, while it complains of these honours being withheld in a particular instance, expresses what they ought to have been:—

"You see that neither are the tents pitched, nor the sheep killed, nor the cakes prepared, nor the wine heated, nor the dried hams and other meat-offerings forthcoming. Alas! the sight of these tombs is enough to grieve one. The swampy ground receives not the savour of flesh nor fish, nor the fragrance of tea or of wine. There has not been thrown upon them so much as two shovelfuls of fresh earth, nor

* Du Halde, vol. ii. p. 212-218. Navarette, in Churchill, vol. i. pp. 71, 72. Morrison's Dictionary, vol. i. pp. 367, 368. Mémoires, tome iv. pp. 10, 12, 149. Staunton, vol. iii. pp. 164, 165.

burnt over them a single roll of paper, nor have they been sprinkled with so much as half a cup of warm wine." And elsewhere it is said, "Who will, weepingly, deck our tombs with gilded paper, or burn incense to our memory!"*

Certain more solemn testimonies of homage are rendered periodically by the united kindred. Twice in the year they assemble in spacious apartments, called halls of ancestors, to which they throng sometimes in thousands. A child, very ridiculously, was wont to be set up to personate the deceased, for whom is now substituted a picture, or more commonly a mere tablet, expressing his name and qualities. These, ranged along the walls, receive the humble prostrations which custom prescribes. Before them are placed long tables, covered with choice viands and wine, which are first offered to them, and then eaten by the company; and the ceremony, as formerly intimated, ends in a gay, and sometimes tumultuary, festival. The missionaries have started the question, whether the Chinese really believe their forefathers to be present at these solemnities. Du Halde maintains that they are practised merely as proofs of filial affection, and that all ideas beyond this are mere chimeras introduced by the bonzes. Navarette, on the contrary, after deeply considering the subject, concludes that the souls of the deceased are really believed to be throned in the tablets, and to enjoy the homage as well as the victuals presented to them. On such occasions the human heart is liable to contradictions, of which it is itself unconscious.† It seems difficult

* Davis' Heir in his Old Age, pp. 66-68, 74.

† Du Halde, vol. ii. p. 221-223. Churchill, vol. i. p. 72. Chinese Repository, April 1833.

to suppose that the relations should present food, without some idea of there being an invisible partaker; yet, as they themselves eat the provisions, the deceased can scarcely be supposed to enjoy that gratification. Probably, if strictly examined, they would be at a loss to express their own actual belief.

Next to the domestic duties the forms of social intercourse are the chief object of regulation. "The empire," says Navarette, "is all a court, and its inhabitants all courtiers."* The most minute particulars,—how to enter a house, and how to quit it; how to rise up, and how to sit down; how to salute, and how to take leave,—are determined with the utmost precision, varying only according to the relative rank, age, and station of the parties. Voluminous works have been written on this subject, particularly one of high authority, which contains no fewer than three thousand rules.† Its precepts are sanctioned by the government, and their execution watched over by the great board of the Li-pou; so that an infringement of them is not only a breach of politeness, but an act of petty rebellion. These ceremonies are felt by a stranger to be tiresome in the extreme; but the natives, trained from their earliest infancy, have usually, by the age of eight or nine, acquired the habit of performing them with ease. They consider the observance of them as a proof of that politeness which ought to distinguish a citizen of the Celestial Empire from a barbarian; and all their ideas of national superiority are confirmed, when they see foreigners either neglecting them altogether, or performing them in an awkward manner. They are said to hold the

* Churchill's Coll. vol. i. p. 65. † Du Halde, vol. ii. p. 170.

maxim, that no ambassador is fit to appear before their emperor, the Son of Heaven, till he has spent forty days in previous preparation; but this rule appears not to have been enforced by the Tartar princes when receiving the late missions from European potentates.

When one person is to visit another with whom he is not intimate, he must announce his intention by delivering to the servant a billet written on red paper, and folded like a screen, expressing who he is, and what is his object. The various modes of writing, ornamenting, and folding such epistolary addresses, require to be so nicely adapted to the relative circumstances of the parties, that scarcely any one can produce a note in which a critical eye shall not detect some blemish. He must, in particular, name himself only in the third person, and in the humblest terms; as, for instance,—"The tender and sincere friend of your lordship presents himself to pay his duty, and make his reverence even to the earth." When sent to persons of consequence, or on occasions of high ceremony, this notice must be accompanied with presents, of a number and value proportioned to the rank of the grandee; and another paper must contain a list of these, allotting one line to each, and adding, for instance,—"The servant takes the liberty to offer to his lord a few curiosities, which come from his mean and vile country." It appears even that a stranger, if he make a similar display of liberality, may thus solicit admission to any person whose acquaintance he wishes to cultivate.* The master of the house always passes a high panegyric on the gifts, saying, perhaps, "Whatsoever

* Iu-kiao-li, vol. iii. p. 43-52.

comes from the precious kingdom, the noble province of the doctor, is extremely fine, and admirably wrought." If, however, he declines on any pretext to receive them, this is equivalent to a polite rejection of the visit. Most commonly, if their amount be great, he selects a few, returning the rest. If inclined to receive the stranger, he conducts himself strictly according to his condition in life, either waiting for him in the house, or going to meet him at the door, or even in the street. His introduction into the principal hall is accompanied with many ceremonies, for all of which there is written authority. Having reached that place, the master makes a low bow to a chair, wipes it with his robe, and invites the guest to sit down. Those who are versant in the etiquette of high life, find no difficulty in carrying on a conversation, because every question which ought to be asked, and the suitable answer to it, are inserted in printed books. Tea is then presented; but how to drink it is a mystery, which only the most learned doctors can fully comprehend. The guest ought to rise, and, taking the cup solemnly in both hands, make a low reverence, in the course of which it should touch the ground. After this, he raises it to the mouth with his left hand, and drinks off the contents at a prescribed number of draughts. The departure of the visiter, too, is accompanied with a repetition of the former ceremonies, but in a reversed order. Yet it ought to be mentioned, that after this barrier of forms has been passed, the Chinese, with the exception of a few pompous fools, converse nearly on as easy and agreeable a footing as other nations.*

* Du Halde, vol. ii. pp. 170, 171, 184, 186. Le Comte, vol. ii.

Although the habits of this people are peculiarly retired and domestic, they have a few annual festivals, celebrated with a splendour unusual among Europeans. The most remarkable is that of the New Year, or, more strictly, the beginning of the first moon. A considerable time is occupied in preparations for this anniversary, and it is even alleged, that a number of petty thefts are committed to provide the means of observing it with due pomp. For two days there is nothing but visiting, rejoicing, letting off fireworks, acting plays, burning ornamented papers, and all imaginable effusions of gayety; and, some time both before and after, the government-offices are shut, and all public business suspended.

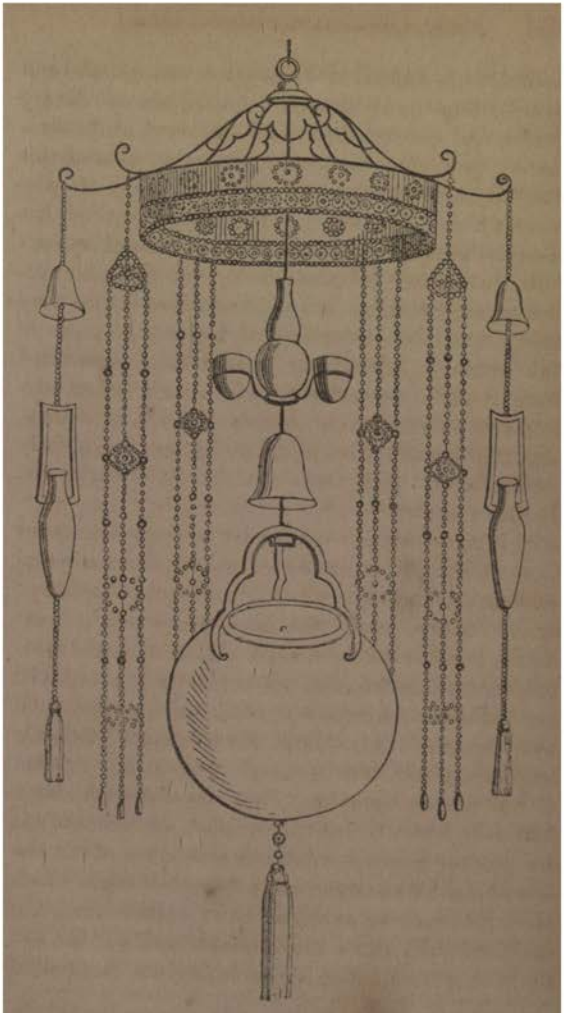
On the 15th of the same month, the Feast of Lanterns affords a still more splendid exhibition. We have already mentioned that lanterns form a favourite display of Chinese magnificence, and are the object of a great national manufacture. Some are of stupendous size, measuring twenty-seven feet in diameter, so that the interior composes a spacious apartment. Le Comte asks his countrywomen, what they would think of receiving visits and assisting at balls in a lantern. The more ordinary description are about four feet high, the circumference divided into six faces, each a foot and a half broad; the whole being curiously adorned with carved work, as well as with satin tassels and ribands elegantly disposed. In some instances the interior is lined with fine transparent silk, on which are painted flowers, landscapes, and even human figures: of

p. 37-41. Purchas, vol. iii. p. 391. Navarette, in Churchill, vol. i. pp. 64, 65.

course, when lighted with numerous wax-candles and lamps, they make a most brilliant show. Every street, and the windows of every house, are illuminated by them. Le Comte estimates, that at this festival two hundred millions of lanterns are displayed throughout the empire. One specimen has already been inserted; and as the ornament is so peculiarly Chinese, we shall here, from the same collection of drawings, introduce another, which may afford some idea of the elegant forms often given to this article. Among the great also are exhibited those splendid fireworks, in which their artists particularly excel; for the reports of their brilliancy, though somewhat discredited by Le Comte, are fully confirmed by those witnessed at Zhe-hol by the British embassy.*

Several other festivals, on a minor scale, occur throughout the year, and every family has occasional celebrations peculiar to itself. Those of marriage and sepulture have been already described; next to them rank the birthdays. That of any distinguished individual gives rise to general gayety; and visiters crowd to bestow presents and pay the usual testimonies of respect, receiving in return a suitable entertainment. The birth of a son is an occasion of still greater rejoicing. He is carried to the large hall, and formally presented before the tablet of his ancestors. The rich kill numerous fowls, while the poorer classes content themselves with eggs, which are kept ready to entertain their neighbours. On the third day, when the infant is washed, the festivity is renewed; the eggs, which are painted of

* Du Halde, vol. ii. p. 165-168. Le Comte, vol. i. p. 228-231. Staunton, vol. iii. pp. 72, 73.



Chinese Lantern.

various colours, and called the eggs of the third day, are bestowed in profusion; and the friends are entertained with all the magnificence which the circumstances of the parent can admit.

After delineating the forms and arrangements of social and domestic life, there still remains an important but difficult task, that of estimating the moral qualities of this people. National character,—a somewhat vague and complex subject,—has often been described in a loose and fanciful style, and when indiscriminately applied to individuals, must lead to very false conclusions. Yet, doubtless, there are certain mental features peculiar to every people; and there are habits of life and modes of action which distinguish them from others. These are usually the result of the political circumstances in which they are placed, and the influence of which it is very important to ascertain.

The first elements of knowledge are more generally diffused in China than in any part of the world, with the exception of Europe. In every province, several thousands enter annually into competition for those literary honours which, if attained, raise them to the highest stations in the empire. Although by far the greater number are disappointed, they retain the acquisitions to which this motive had prompted them. There are few families without at least one member able to read;* and Mr Gutzlaff found this a favourite amusement even among the mariners on board the vessel in which he sailed.† The attention is chiefly directed to the ancient standard works, which breathe a rational spirit, and are filled with

* Staunton, vol. ii. p. 281.
† Journal of Three Voyages, p. 73.

sound moral precepts. There is a general feeling of reverence for these instructions, which Dr Morrison considers as a distinction in favour of China, especially if compared with modern Europe, where, "to utter a moral or religious sentiment any where but in the pulpit, is esteemed perfectly insufferable." While the professors of a religion which specially inculcates meekness and forgiveness make honour consist in the indulgence of pride and resentment, the natives of that empire despise the rude, instead of fighting with them. They would "stand and reason with a man, when an Englishman would knock him down, or an Italian stab him." The same writer tells us, they wish to show that their conduct is equitable, and are willing to yield to what appears so.* This disposition, with the strictness of the police, and the great importance attached to external manners, produces, even among the lower orders, a polish and urbanity unknown among the same class in European countries. A number of wagoners, when they chanced to meet in a narrow track, instead of a clamorous contest, ending perhaps in blows, have been observed courteously talking together, and contriving the means of mutual extrication. Open breaches of the laws are comparatively rare; and society proceeds, generally speaking, in a peaceable and orderly tenor.†

In domestic life, with the few serious exceptions already mentioned, and one still to be added, the conduct of this people seems on the whole laudable. Although the extensive obligations attached to the

* Morrison's View of China, p. 121-124.
† Du Halde, vol. ii. pp. 128, 129.

ties of kindred may not be strictly fulfilled in every instance, they are enforced by public opinion; and any signal failure is branded with peculiar odium. The result is, that although there is no national provision for the infirm and the unemployed, nor any private associations for their relief, and though the labouring-classes are generally poor, it is believed, that through the kindness of relations they are never reduced to absolute want, nor to the necessity of begging on the public road.*

It has appeared that the Chinese are entitled to the praise of industry, using indefatigable application, and employing the utmost ingenuity in procuring the necessaries and conveniences of life. We have, moreover, had occasion to observe, that the charge often hastily advanced against them, of an aversion to improvement, has no foundation but in the jealous policy of the supreme authorities.

Notwithstanding these qualities, in which they appear equal, or even superior to Europeans, we agree with Dr Morrison, that they are on the whole a less estimable people. This will perhaps be apparent, when we enumerate the faults with which they are said to be chargeable.

Amid all the amenity of their social intercourse, it seems agreed that they are almost complete strangers to any thing that can be called philanthropy. While their affections are concentrated in the bosom of their kindred, the ties which connect them with the great body of the species are scarcely felt. It is believed, that there does not exist a single charitable institution throughout the whole empire. Their moralists inculcate benevolence upon rulers, but

* Staunton, vol. ii. pp. 257-59, 281, 282.

consider that with them exclusively rests the care of providing for the public well-being. Private beneficence, accordingly, finding no room for exercise, seems to remain altogether dormant. Each person is, as it were, restricted within his own private circle, and acquires an apathy to every thing beyond it. English sailors have observed, that when a Chinese happened to drop into the sea, and they were using every possible effort to save him, his own countrymen showed not the slightest concern, but continued to busy themselves in their ordinary occupations.* It is alleged also, that amid the apparent coolness with which wrongs and insults are endured, a secret resentment is often fostered; and that they watch long and silently for a favourable opportunity to satiate their revenge. In many districts law is said to be much resorted to as a means of gratifying enmity; and parties will mortgage their whole property in order to have the pleasure of seeing their opponent endure the bastinado.†

Infanticide, too, which is practised on a greater scale and with less scruple than among any other people, is a deep stain on their character. Difficulty of subsistence is pleaded as the excuse; and it must be admitted that the crime prevails only among the lowest and most destitute class. It is said to have become general in the reign of Chi-hoang-ti, when land was first made private property, and it continued to take root during the troubles with which the empire was afterwards afflicted.‡ It is most common in great cities, and among the population

* Barrow, p. 167.
† Du Halde, vol. ii. p. 131. Churchill, vol. i. p. 47.
‡ Mémoires, tome ii. pp. 396, 397.

who occupy the rivers and canals, while it is nearly unknown in the rural districts.* The female sex, that oppressed and despised portion of the species, are almost exclusively its victims. Life is usually extinguished by immersing the head of the infant in water; but sometimes a large dish is merely placed above her, and she is left to die a lingering death. Navarette saw one who had remained three days in this condition; she was parted only by a few boards from her mother; her father, grandfather, and grandmother, were constantly passing the spot; yet her cries, which pierced the heart of the missionary, "could make no impression upon those monsters." He obtained permission to take away the child; but she was past recovery, and died in a few days, after severe sufferings.† Still there have not been wanting native authors who have raised their voice against this enormity. Dr Morrison quotes one of high reputation, who tells his countrymen that the "drowning of daughters is a most wicked thing," and declares the perpetrators to be "worse than wolves or tigers." Unable, seemingly, to impress upon them the value of the sex upon other grounds, he reminds them, "if there were no daughters there could be no mothers."‡ Notwithstanding these precepts, certain it is, that the law, otherwise so rigorous, does not take the slightest cognizance of this crime, nor ever subjects those guilty of it to punishment. Amiot even charges the government with inviting to its perpetration; for every morning, before it is light, wagons traverse the different quarters of Pe-king to receive the dead in-

* Mémoires, tome vi. p. 320-331.
† Churchill, vol. i. p. 76.
‡ Dictionary, vol. i. p. 602.

fants.* They are all conveyed to a particular place, and those in whom there are any remains of life, are said to be nursed and educated. The dead are deposited in a huge crypt or vault, and quicklime is thrown upon them that the flesh may be speedily consumed. Once a-year the bones are collected and burnt in presence of commissioners sent by the Li-pou board. The ashes are thrown into the river, the bonzes uttering a prayer that the next life may be longer and happier than the unfortunate one which had so quickly closed, and that these remains may serve as materials for the formation of other beings. Amiot suspects that this process is partly prompted by the dread that the skeletons may be applied to some unhallowed use, either of magic or sorcery, or is connected with the absurd idea that a mixture of them improves the beauty of porcelain. The missionaries at Pe-king appear to have obtained such details as to justify the belief that the number of infants destroyed was upwards of 3000 annually. This proportion, if supposed to extend over only half the empire, would give a very large amount.†

Another gloomy feature, which seems inconsistent with the mildness and timidity usually ascribed to the Chinese character, is the frequency of suicide. This is attested, not only by travellers, but by the laws, and especially by their poetry and novels,

* Both Amiot and Staunton (vol. ii. p. 336) use expressions as if the children were merely exposed; but this in such a climate could seldom have been so immediately fatal. The details of the missionary, as well as those of Morrison and Navarette, seem clearly to show the full understanding to be, that the infants shall be found destitute of life. "Suffoquer les enfans" is the expression used by Parennin, an excellent observer, and in general favourable to the Chinese.—Lettres Edifiantes, tome xxi. p. 148.

† Mémoires, tome vi. p. 320, &c.; tome ii. pp. 400, 401.

where attempts to commit it, especially among females, are very often described. No sooner does any one feel herself in a situation which she considers desperate, than the noose is round her neck. These works may doubtless exaggerate its frequency, with the view of producing effect; but the most remarkable circumstance is, that in the narratives which assume the loftiest moral tone, not the slightest blame is ever attached to this dreadful deed. On the contrary, the perpetrator is often represented as one endowed with the most amiable qualities, and always an object of pity, not of censure. The laws, proceeding upon this idea, impose a severe punishment upon those who, by injustice or violence, drive others to commit suicide; and the desire of involving an enemy in these penalties has been sometimes supposed to operate as a motive in urging to the crime.* It is remarkable that the same notions with regard to self-murder prevailed among the great men of classic antiquity. It seems to have been reserved for Christianity, by opening up the brightest hopes of a future state, to teach men to submit meekly to the will of the Supreme Disposer, and tranquilly to abide their appointed lot.

Insincerity and dishonesty in trade are faults with which the Chinese have been very generally charged. Their distinctive quality, according to Le Comte, is to cozen and deceive,—an assertion which Du Halde thinks exaggerated, but still true to a certain extent. Many of them are said, on being detected, to manifest no shame, but merely express mortification at not having been sufficiently

* Staunton, Ta-tsing-leu-lee, vol. i. p. 335. Churchill, vol. i. p. 47.

dexterous in their knavery.* Mr Gutzlaff considers this fault as shared by them in common with all Asiatics,†—a conclusion which is too general, because it can apply only to the Hindoos, Persians, and other subjects of the great despotic empires, and not to the Afghans, Tartars, and similar tribes. Subjection to absolute power breaks down the dignity of the human character, makes men dependent on the favour and caprice of others, and, by depriving them of direct and honourable means of attaining their aims, tempts them to use unworthy contrivances. A court, even in Europe, is not unfrequently described as the seat of art and intrigue. Almost all the leading men in China are in the situation of courtiers, relying for promotion on the favour of a superior, towards whom they are thus induced to practise every form of flattery and deception. The scandalous disregard of truth manifested by the highest functionaries in their intercourse with the English embassy, could never have been tolerated even in the most corrupted circles of the West. Among the venders of petty commodities a similar system of fraud is said to be prevalent. Strangers who have purchased a fat duck or a delicate ham, on cutting them up have found the interior a mere compound of wood and earth.‡ Yet these reproaches cannot be applied without many honourable exceptions. The Hong, and other responsible merchants, who conduct the foreign trade of Canton, are distinguished by a degree of fair dealing, of which there are few examples in any country. Those of

* Le Comte, vol. i. p. 335. Du Halde, vol. ii. p. 132.
† History, vol. i. p. 57.
‡ Du Halde, vol. ii. p. 133.

Yarcund, according to Mr Burnes, enjoy an equally high reputation.*

Another blemish, though comparatively venial, is national pride, carried to a more overweening height than in any other country possessed of the same degree of intelligence. According to the orthodox belief, China is the world; and all other regions that may happen to exist are only appendages to it. There alone man was produced of regular form and in full perfection; the remainder of the human race are mere dross and refuse, thrown out by nature to the extremities of the earth. Nor can these unfortunate outcasts possess any thing that is valuable, unless so far as they submit to the rule of the Celestial Empire, and receive the instructions of its sages.† Dr Milne quotes a grave author who congratulates himself that he was not born in the barbarous countries of the West,—"For then," says he, "I must have lived in a cave under ground,—eaten the bark and roots of trees,—worn leaves and long grass for my covering,—and been really a beast though in the shape of a man."‡ In palliation, however, of this inordinate pride, we may observe that, down to a very recent period, all the nations with whom the Chinese came into contact, were either utterly barbarous, or had derived from the empire all they possessed of letters and civilisation. The Greeks, who equally assumed the right of despising others, were not so superior to the Persians and Egyptians as the Chinese are to the tribes of Tartary. It may be thought, indeed, that the in-

* Travels in Bokhara, vol. ii. p. 231.
† Le Comte, vol. i. p. 177. Du Halde, vol. ii. p. 135.
‡ Gutzlaff's Journal, Pref. p. 77.

tercourse with Europeans, which has now lasted several centuries, ought by this time to have opened their eyes; but this connexion, so far as it respects the more intelligent natives of one portion of the globe, has been confined to a few of their leading men. There has, indeed, at the single point of Canton, been a pretty constant communication. But our seamen, with whom they are best acquainted, seldom possess any attainments beyond professional knowledge; and, even without viewing the British tar in his warm moments, or when goaded by violence, his boisterous good-fellowship is quite contrary to every thing decorous in their eyes; and hence they are said to hold him in greater aversion than the same class of persons belonging to other nations.* The higher class of Chinese, to whom the results of Western science and ingenuity have been exhibited, so far from viewing these acquirements with bigoted indifference, expressed the greatest interest and admiration. Their faith, indeed, was put to a hard trial when, a map of the world being laid before them, they were requested to look in it for their own country. At first they imagined that the three old continents were China, while America and the islands seemed a large allowance for the other countries of the earth; but when told that this was Europe, this Africa, this India, they asked in amazement, where was their own empire, and were mortified in the extreme when shown the corner of the world within which it is confined. They appear, however, to have been so sensible† of the superior knowledge possessed by the strangers, as not to reject

* Staunton, vol. ii. p. 97.
† Du Halde, vol. ii. pp. 135, 136.

the information they conveyed. There is, indeed, room to suspect, that since the great extension of British power in the East, dread, not contempt, is the prevailing sentiment among their statesmen, and that this feeling explains the motive upon which the intercourse is so strictly limited. They still, however, find it convenient to keep the body of the people in the dark on this subject, and to maintain among them unimpaired the loftiest ideas of Chinese supremacy. We have seen how the gifts bestowed by the English were represented to the people as tribute sent to the emperor. Even the following preamble in his reply to the Dutch envoys marks the high pretensions to which this monarch still lays claim:

"I consider my own happy empire, and other kingdoms, as one and the same family; the princes and the people are in my eye the same men. I condescend to shed my blessings over all,—strangers as well as natives; and there is no country, however distant, that has not received instances of my benevolence. Thus, all nations send to do me homage, and to congratulate me incessantly."

Superstition is an evil which, in their present twilight of knowledge, and unassisted by revelation, this people could scarcely escape. While the higher classes affect a cold rationality, the multitude are completely under the sway of astrology, divination, magic, and sorcery. The trade of fortune-telling, or, as Purchas* terms it, "selling lies," is practised on a great scale, with a display of costume and implements fitted to delude the ignorant votary.†

* Purchas, vol. iii. p. 395.

† See Representation of Chinese Fortune-teller (from a Native Drawing), Vignette to vol. iii.

The laws, by the denouncement of certain penalties, intimate the existence of persons who seek to raise evil spirits by incantations. From the same source we learn that a more horrid crime may sometimes flow from this dark source,—murder, with the intent to use the mangled body for purposes of divination.*

But the bad propensities now mentioned are by no means universal among the people. The most numerous body, composed of little proprietors and farmers, assembled in villages, and tilling the soil with their own hands, appear to display an amiable and primitive simplicity. An intelligent missionary describes them as good neighbours, interested in each other's welfare; and Mr Abel declares, that the little he saw of this class was altogether favourable. Mr Barrow allows, that even those who were tyrannically impressed for the service of the embassy showed themselves cheerful, willing, and always good humoured.† Mr Gutzlaff's observations, likewise, we shall find to be greatly in their favour. The following poem, there is reason to believe, exhibits a true picture of what the inhabitants are in the rural districts.

THE VILLAGE.

"Neither mandarins nor merchants think of coming into this humble spot; and the inhabitants reach the end of their career without an idea of quitting it. Poverty and labour have preserved in it the manners of the earliest ages. Emperors and dynasties have succeeded each other, yet we are there

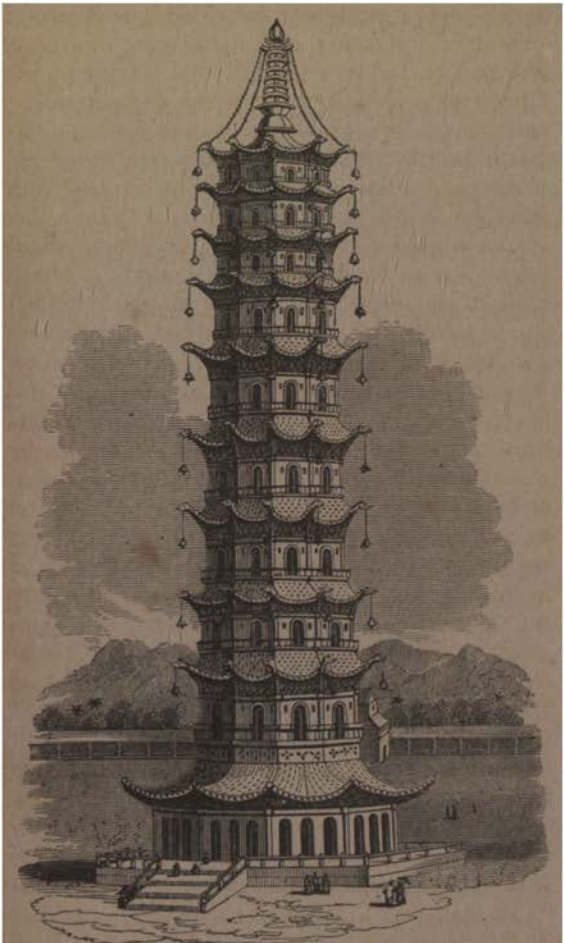
* Staunton, Ta-tsing-leu-lee, pp. 175, 309.
† Mémoires, tome iv. p. 334. Barrow, p. 80. Abel, p. 233.

still only in the reign of Yao. Old and young labour in the fields, assisting and encouraging each other. Some cheer the rest amid their labour by songs, others guide them by counsels, and all end the day without care or trouble. Heat and cold, rain and drought, change of weather or season, are the only events which affect them, or give rise to conversation. When the gilded harvests invite to the use of the hook, all the houses are empty, and the village has no inhabitants. The women take out their repast to the reapers, and return in the evening seated on the sheaves, with which the wagon is loaded. What cries of joy,—what songs in every direction, when the corn is lodged! What sweet perfumes are burnt,—what amiable prayers,—what humble prostrations, when the first fruits in every household are offered to the great Master of heaven and earth! It is only after this high ceremony that the granaries are filled. The children, crowding at the gate, indulge in a thousand sports. The young girls remain by themselves; but they have been seen in the fields, when, before sunrise, they went to gather mulberry-leaves for their silk-worms. Give your eldest daughter to my son, says one to his neighbour. Give your youngest to mine, says another. The aged grandmothers communicate the consent which they had already received. All the village share the festival, and wish a thousand blessings on the newly-married couples. The men, seated on mats in the court, talk, laugh, sing, and pass the *pipa* to each other; while the women, shut in the house, amuse themselves in their own way. Generations are multiplied under the same roof. The decrepit old man exhorts all the family to live

in peace, and dies without having known either envy or remorse."*

A short view of the outward accommodations of life, with its ornamental arts, seems necessary to complete this picture of the Chinese people. In all these there is the usual character of originality, as compared with what is observable, not only in Europe, but in every other country of the East. Their architecture, for example, displays nothing of that substantial aspect and pure taste which distinguish the Grecian, or even the Gothic. Brick is in general one of their most solid materials; while the ornamental part consists chiefly of wood, formed into columns, carved and painted with brilliant colours. To the more costly structures are also attached bells, flags, tassels, and other embellishments; their effect is light and airy; and many, though they cannot be admitted by our artists to claim a classic rank, must yet be allowed to possess beauty of a certain description. In other countries, temples usually afford the finest specimens of architectural grandeur; but not so in China, where the popular religion is professed only by the humblest classes; so that there is not probably in the empire a sacred edifice rivalling in magnificence the monastery of Zhe-hol in Tartary. The most splendid are the lofty towers, called *ta*, rising by successive stages, of which there is at least one in almost every large city, especially of the south, reared usually in commemoration of some great event. The most conspicuous is that at Nan-king, said to be constructed of porcelain, the various descriptions of which are not

* Mémoires, tome xiii. p. 522.



Porcelain Tower.

very distinct; but it appears evidently to consist of nine successive stories, each adorned with a cornice and gallery, and covered with a roof of green tiles. On the top is a pinnacle in the shape of a pine-apple, surmounted by a golden ball. The form is octagonal, forty feet wide in the lower part, but diminishing as it rises. The ground-floor is cased with porcelain, which, however, has suffered by the action of the weather; the upper part is of ornamented brick; but all the divisions are so nicely joined as to make the entire edifice seem one piece. From the extremities of the roofs depend bells, which sound when agitated by the wind; and the lower part contains a spacious hall, which, like the successive apartments above, is adorned with numerous paintings and images. Next to the pagodas rank the *pai-loo*, which Europeans have called triumphal arches; but, in fact, they are monuments raised to the memory of illustrious individuals, being erected in vast numbers along the high roads, and in the streets of the great cities. Their form is very singular, presenting usually the outline of three open gates, a large one in the middle, with a smaller on each side. The materials are commonly timber, and even where stone is employed, the pieces are joined together by tenons and mortises, as in a wooden fabric; and they are sometimes fantastically embellished with figures of men, animals, flowers, birds, and other objects.* Many of the bridges may rank with the most elegant buildings in the empire; the ornaments are various, and much in the style of the

* Du Halde, vol. ii. p. 161-164. Staunton, vol. ii. p. 289. One of the most remarkable of these pai-loos has been introduced into the plate given on p. 23 of vol. i., and may serve as a specimen of this species of structure.

triumphal arch; but, on account of their destination, more solid materials, freestone, and even marble, are used in their construction.

The mansions of the opulent do not possess any exterior magnificence. The nature of the government would probably render it imprudent to make such an open display of wealth; while the residences of public men are usually official, held by each during his period of rule. The house is raised from the floor by a single story; the roof is of tile, turned up and rounded at the extremities, so as to give it a resemblance to the Tartar tent,—a form which, as Mr Barrow observes, "stands confessed throughout all the Chinese dwellings." Upon it, as well as upon the wall, usually constructed of brick, some carving and painting are expended. The outer porch opens into a spacious and even elegant hall, where strangers are wont to be received. All along each side are rows of pillars, only of wood indeed, but often valuable, and very richly painted and varnished. Generally speaking, however, less expense is lavished upon the mansion itself than upon its furniture. This, which among other Asiatic nations is singularly deficient, is with them rich and commodious. While the Hindoo and the Persian recline on carpets spread over the floor, or upon a bench round the wall, the Chinese, like ourselves, use tables and chairs, often elaborately carved and exquisitely polished. From the roof are suspended those superb lanterns, in which they so much delight; while adjoining cabinets are filled with precious collections of porcelain. Those who pique themselves on elegant taste adorn these and other parts of the house with shrubs, as well as with satin hangings, on which the maxims

of their sages are inscribed in golden letters. There is an interior hall, also handsome, to receive intimate friends, and beyond it extend successive courts, whence branch off the private apartments, which are rather numerous than spacious; for, as the practice of polygamy renders it necessary that great numbers should be accommodated under the same roof, all the inmates cannot have large rooms. Such small chambers were observed with surprise by the Dutch, especially in the imperial palace. In furnishing them, however, the owners display a great superiority over other Orientals. With the latter, the luxury of a bed is unknown or despised; the richest individual throws himself on a sofa, or mat spread upon the floor, to taste the sweets of slumber. But the Chinese have beds similar to those of Europe, composed of wooden frames, richly carved, painted, and gilded, with curtains of white satin, beautifully flowered, or of a thin gauze, which, during the extreme heat, exclude tormenting insects, while they preserve coolness. There are also dressing-tables, cabinets, and screens, of the most elegant structure, and brilliantly varnished. The observation of Du Halde upon the absence of mirrors and tapestry seems to mark rather a difference of taste from Europeans than any inferiority of splendour.*

Gardening is another object on which the opulent lavish both cost and care, though their taste in this particular is very different from that which was long universal, and still to a great extent prevails, in the West. Le Comte, accustomed to think of a

* Du Halde, vol. ii. p. 144-151. Le Comte, vol. i. pp. 210-212, 221, 222. Staunton, vol. ii. p. 51-53. Barrow, pp. 194-332. Native Paintings in the Company's Collection.

piece of ground laid out in square plots, divided into corresponding parallel alleys, with trees and shrubs planted in regular rows, sometimes even cut into artificial shapes, will scarcely allow that their gardens deserve the name.* Their main study is to disguise art, to make the place appear as one in which Nature has sported without control, exhibiting not only her soft and beautiful scenes, but those which are bold, rugged, and sublime. This love for wildness seems to have arisen in consequence of its almost total absence from a country where pasturage is no longer practised, and every spot is with such extreme diligence enclosed and brought under the plough. To produce the intended effect immense labour is employed: artificial hills are reared; rocks, if necessary, are transported from distant quarries; hollows are dug out, which, being filled with water, become lakes. In the imperial gardens, where the requisite space could be commanded, an exceedingly grand effect is produced; but when every petty prince and mandarin thinks proper to adopt the same plan, and within the bounds of half an acre to surround his dwelling with rock, forest, and lake, the result is rather a fantastic mockery of Nature than a true exhibition of her grandeur. Yet we must say, after examining the beautiful models of these ornamented villas which are preserved in the Company's Museum, as well as the various paintings of them made for the decoration of lanterns, that even this miniature display of striking scenes appears by no means devoid of beauty. A specimen has therefore been given, from which the

* Le Comte, vol. i. pp. 224, 225.

Ornamented Buildings.

reader may be enabled to judge for himself.* It may be observed in passing, that the principle, in Chinese gardening, of introducing an assemblage of objects under their natural aspect, has been recognised in Britain as founded on the purest taste, and for a century has nearly superseded the more artificial system which formerly prevailed.

One class of edifices may, however, be mentioned, in which outward display is more studied than among any other people. The shops in the main streets of all the great cities are so constructed as to give to them a singularly gay and brilliant aspect. They are indeed only one story in height, and display no elaborate architecture; but, on the other hand, they are richly varnished, gilded, and painted with various colours; lanterns of the most elegant forms are suspended in front; and the name and occupation of the owner are expressed in golden letters. From before each rises a high pole, whence float rich ensigns and pennons, with inscriptions containing every inducement by which customers can be attracted. Many have on the top broad terraces covered with shrubs and flowers. The articles sold are at the same time displayed to the utmost advantage.† The accompanying plate, from a drawing in the Macartney Collection, gives a better idea than any other we have seen of these ornamented ranges. Being apparently situated on the sea or a river, the buildings appear extending along the margin of the water.

The art of painting in China exists in a singular state, combining some marked excellences with very gross and palpable defects. The colouring is executed with a splendour and truth which can scarcely

* See Vignette to the present vol. † Staunton, vol. ii. pp. 260, 290.

be rivalled by the greatest artists in Europe. This appears particularly in drapery, furniture, flowers, and the scales and glossy skin of insects, fishes, and other animals. Even the local tints of landscape are given often with great fidelity and beauty. Yet there is a decided failure in the colouring of the human skin, which is made too monotonous, and without that delicate blending of tints in which its beauty consists. But their principal and characteristic defect appears in the total absence of light and shade; hence every object seems as if it were inserted in a flat surface; no depth or richness of effect is produced; nor are the single figures combined into one harmonious whole. However, they obstinately adhere to their own system, urging, that objects ought to be delineated as they really exist, not according to the imperfect lights under which they appear to the human eye. The introduction of shadows is considered by them to destroy that clear and brilliant effect which is produced by their gorgeous colours. On seeing a portrait of George III., where one part of the face was shaded, they said it would have been very well, had it not been disfigured by that dirty patch. An emperor, who once employed a European artist to execute some pictures, warned him that they must be painted in the clear Chinese style, unobscured by the dingy shadows by which those of his countrymen were spoiled. Another grand blemish consists in the very defective drawing of the human figure, and the almost deformed aspect which it sometimes exhibits. This, too, we incline to think, is chiefly resolvable into the absence of light and shade, which deprives the artist of the means of rounding and foreshortening

his forms. For the same reason, perhaps, although they communicate to the features very considerable truth and force of expression, they do not succeed in producing beautiful countenances, either male or female. The plausible but erroneous principle of showing every thing as it is, not as it appears, has led them to pay little regard to the gradation of tints produced by distance: hence, in some pieces, otherwise meritorious, the remote parts appear as distinct as those in the immediate foreground. This defect, however, is not universal: we have seen landscapes, in which the feeling of distance is very decidedly expressed, and the whole executed in a manner that would do credit to a European master.*

Music, the sister art, must not be passed over; for there is no country on earth where it has been held in equal veneration. It was early viewed, not only as a source of elegant amusement, and capable of inspiring lofty sentiments, but as one of the main foundations on which government and society rest. The illustrious founders of the monarchy, as has been already remarked, ranked among their greatest achievements the invention of musical instruments, and Confucius placed the study of this art almost on a level with that of history and philosophy. The ancient books specify music, along with etiquette, laws, and penalties, as the four means by which a state is kept in good order: they elsewhere declare those who understand music and ceremonies to be the lights of the world. Sixty-nine works on the principles of this art are enumerated as possessing a

* Barrow, p. 324, &c. Paintings in the Company's and Private Collections.

high classical authority.* After all this, it is impossible to learn without surprise the exceedingly low state in which the art actually exists. A considerable variety of instruments has indeed been invented, composed of various materials,—metal, wood, stone, skins, and silk,—so that it is made a boast that all nature has been laid under contribution in order to frame them. Yet among the whole number there is not one, according to Mr Barrow, to which a European ear can listen with pleasure. Even Du Halde, while alleging that some gratification may be derived from their sounds, admits them to be so rude as scarcely to merit the name of harmony. Mr Ellis remarks, that the performance of their military bands can only be likened to the dissonance which would proceed from myriads of cracked penny trumpets. While music was held an affair of state, its progress, like that of other pursuits, would probably be checked by official restraint and regulation. It was necessary that its notes, like every thing else pertaining to science, should be strictly derived from the eight entire and broken lines which compose the koua, and that they should be connected with the mysterious principles of Yang and Yin. Since government withdrew its patronage from this art, it no longer leads to honour or distinction. It is practised chiefly at marriages, funerals, and other processions; and the only class said to cultivate it for amusement are loose females, and those trained for concubines. The Emperor Kanghi, on being satisfied by Father Pereira of the superiority of Europeans in this pursuit, made some arrangements for improving the national taste; but

* Mémoires, tome iv. p. 21; tome vi. p. 22-25.

these have evidently produced no permanent effect. The Chinese, indeed, endeavour to play in unison, but have no idea of counterpoint, or the harmony produced by the blending of contrasted notes; this appears to them to create a mere confusion of sounds. Nor have they any conception of the art of writing music, and were, it is said, completely astonished when they saw Pereira by this means make himself master of a tune after a single hearing.*

National dress claims also some attention, as throwing a considerable light on the character and ideas of a people; and this is one of those secondary objects which their maxims have exalted into primary importance. From the earliest ages, the emperors have shown extreme solicitude, and placed much of their glory, in contriving the robes which might best adorn themselves and their functionaries; and we have even seen a prime-minister panegyrized for the skill with which he acted the part of royal tailor. Amid all the vicissitudes to which the government has been exposed, its zeal upon this point has never relaxed. The vestments and headdresses of officers of every rank, their colour, their shape, almost their every fold, are immutably fixed by imperial statute; and a book, published by authority, contains representations of these, which must be faithfully adopted under severe penalties. The attire of the non-official classes is also prescribed, so far, at least, as to prevent it from coinciding in a single particular with that of any of their rulers. Thus, the same costume is worn from age to age, and there is no room for those capricious changes of

* Barrow's Travels, p. 313-315. Du Halde, vol. iii. p. 65-70. Ellis' Embassy, vol. i. p. 366. Mémoires, tome vi. p. 127.

fashion which Europeans are so fond of indulging. We do not purpose to enter into minute details upon this topic; but it may be observed, in general, that the taste of the Chinese is entirely opposite to ours; almost every thing which we consider graceful, is regarded by them as unbecoming. They wear long, loose, flowing robes, by which the person is entirely concealed and enveloped; while our tight and varied garments, displaying the form of the person and of the limbs, are considered by them as contrary to every principle of dignity or decorum, and classed among the abominations which justify the contempt with which the people of the West are regarded. The chief article of their attire is a very long vest, or rather gown, which reaches to the feet, and is fastened by a girdle round the waist. It has very wide sleeves which, when not tucked up, cover the hands, and serve instead of gloves. Over it is worn a surtout, which, among the military and Tartars, is short; though with the civil mandarins it sweeps along the ground. In public they always wear boots, which they hasten to put on when they learn that a visiter has entered the house; but these being made of satin, without heels or tops, are more properly stockings, though the sole be defended by a thick cotton lining; and when they travel on horseback, strong leather is substituted. Instead of a hat, they use, both at home and abroad, a bonnet or cap, the materials of which vary according to the season; and its ornaments are specially contrived to indicate the rank of the wearer. The hair is shaved entirely off, with the exception of one long lock behind, hanging downwards from the crown. No blame can attach to the nation on account of

this fantastic custom, which was tyrannically imposed upon them by their Tartar conquerors; and they waged a bloody though fruitless war in defence of their antique *chevelure*, which is said to have been much more graceful. Le Comte reproaches the great men, that while in public they pique themselves so much on decorum, in their houses, consulting only ease and coolness, they go into the opposite extreme, and reduce themselves almost to a state of nudity. He makes the same charge against the peasantry in the southern provinces, who derive, however, some apology from their poverty and the necessity of labouring in a burning atmosphere. On the whole, the impression among the English was, that they are better and more substantially clad than other Orientals. They wear generally dark colours, particularly blue and black; white is their mourning suit; and yellow is strictly confined to the imperial house. But these dingy vestments, we are informed, lead to a disregard of cleanliness, by which they are unfavourably distinguished from the other civilized nations of Asia, rendering them at the same time liable to cutaneous disorders.*

The food of a people is not undeserving of some notice; and it is a matter in which, amid all their intellectual pretensions, the Chinese show themselves deeply concerned. Da Cruz represents it even as an object of the most engrossing interest. Their usual salutation, he says, is not, "'How do you do?' but, 'Have you eaten or not?' for all their good in this world is resolved into eating."† The British

* Mémoires, tome iv. p. 318. Le Comte, vol. i. pp. 188-194. Gutzlaff's Journal, p. 227. Abel, p. 70.

† Purchas, part iii. p. 180.

embassy, in fact, remarked that the mandarins who attended them bestowed much less attention on their studies than their meals, of which they took several in the day, each composed of rich animal food; and nothing is said more to discompose even an humble labourer than to be interrupted in eating his handful of rice. Their formal entertainments, as has been already stated, consist of what we call dressed dishes; the meat being minced into small pieces and placed in numerous cups, which are piled in a symmetrical form on a little table before each guest, and at the same time so adjusted that every one can help himself without moving from his seat: hence the trouble of asking, carving, and handing the pieces round the company, is entirely superseded. The food is divided into convenient morsels; the nuts are cracked; the fruit peeled and cut into slices: so that the stranger enjoys his repast without the slightest exertion. All the other Asiatics, like our European ancestors, convey the food to the mouth with the fingers only; the Chinese have gone a step farther, using for this purpose two small sticks of wood or ivory, with which they lift it so dexterously that no portion almost ever escapes. The giving of dinners is one of the favourite forms in which they display their hospitality and magnificence. Whenever a person of rank arrives in a city, the governor considers it incumbent upon him to invite the stranger to a splendid banquet. A similar mark of attention is bestowed by the friends of a mandarin on his appointment to any high situation; and this entertainment is conducted in the same ceremonious manner as all other parts of their intercourse. It is preceded by three written invitations,—one on the previous day, the second

in the morning, and the third immediately before the company meet. The master of the house leads the principal guest to his table, where he is seated after many compliments and apologies. When this ceremonial is adjusted, the entertainer, by signal, calls upon his friends to begin; when each lifts his chopsticks, carries the food to his mouth, and lays them down all exactly at the same moment,—an officer beating time to preserve uniformity. The same order is observed in each successive morsel and each draught, the latter being frequently repeated. Thus the festival is prolonged three or four hours, during which time, however, those who wish to practise moderation may only raise the food and drink to their lips without actually tasting them. On all high occasions, as formerly observed, a play is acted, usually in the middle of the circle. The particular degree of respect is shown by the quantity of eatables placed before each stranger; and whatever remains is carried home or despatched after him. Next morning the guest returns a written note of thanks for his entertainment.

The animal food used in China, from causes already explained, is chiefly that of the hog and the duck, which can be reared without encroaching on the cultivated fields, and both are very often seen in a dried state. Mutton and game appear only at the tables of the great, and are esteemed delicacies. Still higher importance is attached to certain fantastic luxuries, particularly soups made from the gelatinous substances of birds' nests, sharks' fins, and sea-slug, which, as has been already mentioned, are imported in large quantities from the Oriental islands. Some Europeans consider these dainties as

utterly insipid and disgusting, while others think that, with due seasoning, they might be rendered agreeable. The natives value them, as possessing peculiarly nutritious and restorative qualities. The lower ranks, in consequence of the scarcity of animals, are confined in a great measure to a vegetable diet. They do not, however, like the Hindoos, make a merit of necessity, but eagerly embrace every opportunity to gratify their carnivorous propensities with the flesh of dogs, cats, and other creatures still more disgusting. So small is the discrimination, that Dr Abel found a cat and a pheasant bearing the same price in the market of Canton.

Besides tea, the national drink, which is presented on every occasion, served up at every feast, and even sold on the public roads, the Chinese have two species of strong liquors, which Europeans usually call wine; but being entirely composed of rice fermented or distilled, they ought more properly to be classed with beer and spirits. The latter was considered by the English as the more palatable, though the former is chiefly presented at table. The natives are not in general intemperate; yet it appears from their popular novels, that among certain classes, particularly men of genius, a degree of bacchanalian indulgence is combined with the culture of poetry. Instead of toasts, each successive guest is required to produce an extemporary stanza on a given subject, which must sometimes combine with one which has preceded; and if he fails, an inordinate libation is the forfeit. They are also strongly addicted to the use of tobacco, opium, and other substances supposed to produce an agreeable and exhilarating effect.

CHAPTER VI.

Historical Account of British Intercourse with China.

Early Voyages—Settlement at Bantam, and Transactions with the Chinese—Settlement at Firando in Japan—Difficulties in opening a Trade with China—Weddell's Expedition—Obstructions from the Tartar Conquest—First Mention of Tea—Factories at Tay-wan and Amoy—Tchu-san—Pulo-Condore—All these abandoned—Trade at Canton increases—Co-hong Association—Various Grievances—Lord Anson's Visit—Attempts to re-open Trade at Tchu-san and Amoy—Flint's Expedition—Trade still embarrassed, yet continues to flourish—Affair of the Ship Argo—The Lady Hughes—Lord Macartney's Embassy—British Troops landed at Macao—Affair of the Doris—Lord Amherst's Embassy—The Ship Topaze—Various Disputes—Contraband Trade at Lintin—Attempts to re-open Communication with the Eastern Coast—Voyage of the Amherst—Coast of Quang-tung—Of Fo-kien—Incidents at Amoy—Formosa—Fou-tcheou-fou—Ning-po—Shang-hai—Return—Voyage of the Sylph—Coast of Tartary—Kin-tcheou and Kae-tcheou—Deliverance of a Chinese Crew—Shang-hai—Sha-poo—Poo-too—General Result of these Voyages—System of Free Trade—Arrival of Lord Napier—Umbrage taken by the Chinese Government—Conferences with the Merchants—Proclamation by the Governor—Trade stopped—British Ships ascend the River—Governor perseveres—Lord Napier retires to Macao—His Death—Punishment of Chinese Officers—Trade re-opened—Petition of British Merchants—Observations.

At the first rise of maritime enterprise in Europe, Cathay or Cataia ranked equal, if not superior, to India, among the lands celebrated under the vague but imposing appellation of the East. The name

had been assigned by Marco Polo, whose description had thrown round it a romantic splendour, which at the time, compared with the finest parts of Europe, really belonged to it. As the earliest efforts, both of the British and Dutch, to reach Eastern Asia, were made by way of the north, Cathay and the country of the Great Khan were the first territories at which they expected to arrive. The expedition sent out from England under Sir Hugh Willoughby, in 1553, had for its special design the discovery of that country, with the addition, indeed, of "other regions and islands unknown." The tragical issue of his voyage did not deter the nation from undertaking others in the same direction, and a still greater number to the north-west, seeking to round the continent of America,—attempts founded in complete ignorance of Arctic geography. Their achievements, however, furnished a most interesting chapter in the annals of northern discovery, and form a prominent feature in the first volume of the Edinburgh Cabinet Library, which treats of the navigation of the Polar Seas.

The Portuguese, after accomplishing the passage by the Cape of Good Hope, A. D. 1497, reached the shores of India, but spent a considerable time in exploring the contiguous coasts before they arrived at the borders of this great empire. In these parts of Asia, it had always borne an appellation variously written Sin, Seen, or Cheen, converted into China, by which it has since been exclusively known in Europe. Probably it was not at first distinctly recognised as the Cathay of Marco Polo; yet its fame, under this new title, soon spread, and one of the earliest voyages undertaken from Eng-

land, even in a southern direction, had that region for its object. It was fitted out in 1596 by Sir Robert Dudley, and consisted of three vessels, which were placed under the command of Benjamin Wood, who was furnished with letters from Queen Elizabeth to the emperor: but this enterprise had a most disastrous termination; the ships, with all their crews, appear to have perished, and not a record remains of their unhappy project.*

The merchants were not discouraged by this misfortune from pursuing their career. Soon after, in 1600, they formed the associations, and sent out the expeditions, which issued in the establishment of their flourishing commerce in the East. Following the Dutch, they sought chiefly to procure spices, long considered as the richest object of Oriental traffic, though now sunk in comparative value. With this view, in 1602, they formed a settlement at Bantam, on the northern coast of Java, the most central part of the great Indian Archipelago, and made it the presidency to which all the others were long subordinate. Here the Chinese began to fall under their observation. Every year, in February and March, four large junks arrived, laden with raw silks, velvets, porcelain, sugar-candy, and other commodities, but no mention is made of tea. The trade and wealth of the Bantam territory, and even the culture of pepper, were almost entirely in their hands; a quarter of the city was appropriated to them, built by themselves of bricks and canes, and they were even reported to have erected the wall by which the whole was enclosed. They bore a bad character, which, indeed, Mr Gutzlaff de-

* Churchill's Collection, vol. i. Introduction, pp. 17, 28.

scribes as still generally attaching to Chinese emigrants. Not being allowed to bring any females out of China, they purchased wives on their arrival, and sold them at their departure, carrying the children to their own country. One man is mentioned who had formed such extensive matrimonial connexions, that when about to return he found himself the parent of no fewer than sixty. After selling the mothers, he began to consider, that so numerous an offspring would burden him heavily at home. Retaining therefore only four, he caused the rest to be put up in small lots at different auctions, so that they might pass off unobserved. The king, however, having been apprized of this proceeding, employed an agent, who bought up the successive groups till the whole family were in his hands. His majesty then sent for the merchant, conversed with him generally on the subject of his plans, and put questions as to the manner in which he had disposed of his family. The other replied, that he had found it most convenient to send them home in the last ship, employed in the transmission of his goods. No sooner was this answer given, than the fifty-six, who were in an adjoining apartment, were called in, and presented to their astonished parent. He was immediately thrown into prison, where, it is related, he soon afterwards died.*

The English, on one occasion, had nearly fallen the victims of Chinese dishonesty. A party of them having formed the design of robbing the factory, dug a passage under ground, by which they hoped to carry off its most valuable contents. Just,

* Histoire Générale des Voyages (edit. Amsterdam, 1747-80), tome ii. p. 40-42.

however, as they had reached the spot, they encountered a plank. Dreading the noise unavoidable in sawing or cutting it, they had recourse to fire, which soon effected an opening; but unluckily for them it caught some bags of cotton that were closely packed within. The flame did not spread far; but the smell and smoke excited a general alarm throughout the factory, and the place being examined, their nefarious design was brought to light. The ringleaders were afterwards discovered and executed.*

. The merchants do not seem for some time to have contemplated a direct communication with China,—a peculiar circumstance having attracted their attention towards the more distant regions of Japan. The Dutch, in 1598, fitted out a fleet of five sail for the East Indies, employing William Adams, an Englishman, in the important office of pilot-major. The vessels encountered a series of disasters. Having touched at Cape Gonsalves, on the coast of Africa, many of the men died of sickness. To avoid the Spaniards, they directed their course towards the South Sea; but, in passing the Straits of Magellan, they were separated by a tempest, and a large party were cut off by the natives of Chili. The ship in which Adams sailed proceeded singly across the Pacific, when the crew were reduced to frightful distress, he and six others being alone able to stand upright; at length, on the 19th April 1600, they reached Bovingo, on the coast of Japan, in 32° 30′ north latitude. The Portuguese had still a footing in that empire, and a Jesuit of their nation sought by every possible means to prejudice the emperor against them. Adams, how-

* Histoire Générale des Voyages, tome ii. pp. 53, 54.

ever, appears to have possessed address as well as intelligence. Being invited to court, and employed to instruct that prince in some branches of mathematics, and to build a ship for him on the European model, he so completely gained his favour as to obtain the liberation of the crew. This man, though in the service of a foreign power, did not relinquish his attachment to his native country. In 1611 he addressed a letter to the Company, relating his adventures, which he requested might be communicated to his family, strongly recommending the establishment of a factory in Japan, and undertaking to procure the sanction of the monarch. He did not, indeed, hold out the prospect of much trade in this insular territory, but conceived that, from the abundance of gold and silver, they might be enabled to dispense with their large exports of bullion, and also through this channel might open a profitable trade with the Chinese.* By these representations they were induced to send an expedition in 1611, under Saris, with a letter from James I. to his imperial majesty, who granted permission to trade, and to erect a factory at Firando, which was placed under the direction of Richard Cocks. Two Chinese vessels, laden with sugar, arrived about this time at Nangasaki, who gave a very unfavourable report of the disposition to admit into their country the merchants of any foreign nation. In fact their entrance had been strictly prohibited by a recent edict, and a number of persons were put to death for attempting to infringe this mandate.† The expedition, in returning to Bantam, cruised along the Chinese

* Auber's China, p. 371-385; MS. Records.
† Histoire Générale des Voyages, tome ii. p. 377.

coast, but attempted in vain to induce any of the natives to come on board.*

Notwithstanding these obstacles, efforts were made to open this trade from the factory at Firando, which settlement proved indeed, as Adams had intimated, of little value, unless with a view to that greater object. Letters were even procured from James I. to the Emperor of China; but the Company's agent in 1617 writes, that "no Chinese dare translate and forward the letters, it being death by the laws of their country so to do, or to give passage to any Christian as the bearer of them." Cocks, however, met with a captain from Nan-king, who assured him that the English name was in favour at court, and held out the hope that, if they would merely ask permission to send three ships a-year, and a few factors, without any priests, the sovereign might probably grant these requests.† Our countrymen were asked if they would undertake to prevent the Dutch from plundering their vessels; and, not wishing to acknowledge their want of power, they replied that the king would issue an order to that effect. The negotiation was continued; with a view to promote which, the factory was removed at one time from Firando to Nangasaki, while large sums appear to have been expended to bribe the principal officers at the court of Peking. It was understood that a license was procured from the emperor to send two ships annually to Fou-tcheou-fou, but, owing to his minority and other circumstances, it proved abortive.‡ The suggestion was then made that a settlement on the Spice Islands,

* Histoire Générale des Voyages, tome ii. p. 394.
† Ibid. p. 431.
‡ Gutzlaff, vol. ii. p. 297. MS. Records.

which was anxiously desired on other accounts, might be more conducive to the ulterior object. At last, the Company, finding that the factory at Japan was unprofitable, and afforded no prospect of leading to any benefit, issued orders that it should be abandoned, which were carried into effect in the course of 1623-4.*

About this time the presidency of Bantam communicated to the Court of Directors their views as to the best mode of opening a trade with China. The country, they observe, affords ample materials for it, and though no stranger is permitted to enter, yet to the people "trade is as life," to carry on which they would encounter any danger, and go to any distance. The best plan, therefore, according to their views, is "to plant (form a settlement) in some convenient place, whither they may come, and then to give them knowledge that you are planted." The Dutch are blamed for the great expense and trouble incurred in establishing themselves upon Formosa, —a station by no means secure or commodious,— though, it is remarked, if the English attempted to share it with them, they would guard it like a diamond-mine.†

The Hollanders and the British, in 1619-20, attempted to compose their long differences by what they termed a "treaty of defence," in which they agreed to co-operate in their endeavours to open a trade with this empire. Their mutual jealousy, however, quickly revived, and impelled them to the most hostile proceedings. The Dutch, then in

* Bruce's Annals of the East India Company, vol. i. pp. 180, 250.

† Auber's China, pp. 130, 151.

the zenith of their maritime greatness, while that of the others was only rising, opposed very formidable obstacles to the progress of their rivals. In their eagerness to obtain the monopoly of the finer spices, they sought to exclude all other nations from the Moluccas, and advanced a claim generally to banish the British flag from the eastern coasts of Asia. The trade of Bantam was nearly reduced to the collecting of pepper from the neighbouring shores of Java and Sumatra; and in 1631 the settlement was made subordinate to Surat, to which the presidency was transferred.* This dignity was restored in 1634, but rather with the view of opening a connexion with the coasts of Coromandel and Bengal than with the more eastern countries†. In 1635, indeed, in consequence of a treaty with the Portuguese at Goa, the London was freighted from that port to Canton; but, though scarcely any record of her transactions can be found, she seems, on the whole, to have met with little encouragement to return.‡

Meantime the Company in England were exposed to the competition of a recently-formed body, called Courten's Association, which succeeded in obtaining a patent from the crown.§ The adventurers in this new undertaking sought to distinguish themselves by extraordinary enterprise; and Captain Weddell, who took the lead in their management, was very solicitous to open a trade with China. On the 27th June 1637 he arrived with several vessels off Macao, and transmitted to the governor a letter

* Bruce's Annals, vol. i. pp. 213, 214, 305-317. Auber, p. 128.
† Auber, p. 328. ‡ Ibid. pp. 134, 135.
§ Bruce's Annals, vol. i. p. 331.

from Charles I. The Portuguese gave him a cold reception, complaining that the native authorities had made them responsible, and imposed a heavy fine on account of the unwelcome appearance of the London. Finding that they were not allowed to communicate with Canton but by shallow straits, and were excluded from the spacious channel of the Bocca Tigris, he determined to trace out the latter passage for himself. He despatched a pinnace with fifty men, which in forty-eight hours reached the mouth of this estuary, and began to ascend. In a few days they were met by twenty junks, with a great mandarin on board, who called them into his presence, and began roughly to expostulate on their thus "searching out the prohibited entrances" into the dominions of so great a monarch. Yet, on their expressing friendly intentions, and an earnest desire to accomplish their object, they were allowed to proceed to the vicinity of Canton. There, however, the hoppo and some other chiefs persuaded them to return to Macao, making lavish promises, none of which were fulfilled; and the Portuguese having amused Weddell till their Japan fleet had sailed, issued an absolute interdict against his trading any longer there. Determined, however, not to be thus baffled, he immediately weighed with his whole fleet for the river of Canton, and anchored in the vicinity of a "desolate castle," the extensive ruins of which, we are informed, may still be seen immediately within the entrance of the Bocca Tigris. The Portuguese meantime studiously infused into the mandarins the belief, "that the English were rogues, thieves, and beggars." This, according to Mr Gutzlaff, was no difficult task; such a conviction, in re-

gard to every foreigner, being at all times rooted in the mind of the government. Under its impulse, they privily conveyed into the castle forty-six pieces of cannon; and, when their preparations were completed, opened a fire upon one of his barges. Weddell was not a man to submit to such an outrage. He immediately caused his whole fleet to "birth themselves before the castle," and commenced a formidable attack, which the other party returned; but none of their shot "touched so much as hull or rope;" and when they saw the English boats, having on board a hundred men, making for the shore, the fort was speedily evacuated. Such rough treatment seems really the best mode of gaining any particular point with the Chinese. They forthwith opened a communication, requesting a deputation to be sent to Canton; and when Mounteney and Robinson, two supercargoes, repaired thither, the authorities threw the blame on the Portuguese, granted permission to trade, and even to fortify any position outside of the river. These gentlemen agreed to pay 10,000 reals in duties, and, without farther negotiation, began to load their vessels. The storming of the castle, however, rankled in the mind of the natives, who soon repented of this good treatment. Seven fire-junks were sent down the river, to destroy, if possible, the English fleet; which, however, avoided their attack, but the supercargoes were thrown into confinement, and almost starved. Mounteney, determined to extricate himself, set fire to his apartment, threatening to burn the city; and having thus made a passage, he rushed into the street, with a sword in one hand, and a purse in the other to purchase provisions. On learning these treacher-

ous proceedings Weddell levied open war, laying waste the adjacent towns and villages, attacking and burning several vessels belonging to the imperial fleet. These cogent arguments brought the authorities once more to their senses. The merchants were requested to write to him, desiring that he would forbear any farther acts of hostility, and "all would be well." They themselves were set at liberty, and allowed to conclude their transactions, which they did with all despatch, though much thwarted by the Portuguese. Mounteney is said to have entered into an agreement, by which his constituents were to pay annually 2000 taels (£666), in return for free trade and residence. Rumour seems to have represented this voyage as highly profitable, since the Company's agent at Masulipatan wrote,—"They have been to China, at a place called Canton, where they have made such a voyage, that we conceive never Englishmen were so richly laden as they are with goods, and yet they flow with gold and silver in abundance." There is no mention in the captain's despatch of any such splendid success, nor do the Association appear to have taken any steps to follow up the advantage.*

For upwards of thirty years after this period, the trade with China continued in a state of extreme depression,—the great power and continued hostility of the Dutch presenting obstacles almost insurmountable. This opposition assumed a more decided character when, under the Protectorate, war broke out between the two nations: the English commerce was then almost entirely suspended, and Bantam, during the years 1659 and 1660, was held in close block-

* Gutzlaff's History, vol. ii. p. 298-305. MS. Records.

ade.* During this period also (about 1640) happened the conquest of China by the Mantchoo Tartars,—an event which threw into confusion the whole kingdom, especially Canton and other cities on the coast, where risings were for some time maintained in favour of the native dynasty. For a considerable period no goods of any value could be procured at Macao. At the same time, the loyalists, driven from the land, found a refuge on board their ships, and sought to support themselves by most extensive piracies, which they practised, not only against the Tartars, but all vessels navigating those seas. The Company at home still urged their agents to endeavour to push a trade; but the latter replied, that no ship could be sent to China without certain loss.† In 1664 the Surat sailed to Macao, but was obliged to take her cargo again on board, without being able to dispose of any part of it, having also been burdened with exactions imposed by the Portuguese. That year, however, is memorable for the commencement of the trade in tea, which was imported to the amount of one hundred pounds. Every previous mention of this article had represented it merely as an object of curiosity. The earliest notice in the Company's Records occurs in a letter, dated June 27, 1615, from Mr Wickham at Firando, in Japan, to Mr Eaton at Meaco, requesting that he would send him a pot of the best sort of *chaw*; and among the sums laid out by Mr Eaton for Mr Cocks, is one article, "three silver porringers to drink *chaw* in."‡

About 1670 the Company seem to have deter-

* Bruce's Annals, vol. i. p. 551. † Ibid. p. 431. Auber, p. 136.
‡ MS. Records.

mined to extend this branch of trade, the obstacles to which were in a great measure removed. The Dutch had nearly lost their superiority at sea; the Tartars had almost completed their conquest of China, and restored internal tranquillity; and its maritime power, which consisted at first of roving bands of pirates, had been regularly organized under the celebrated Koxinga, whom the Europeans call King of Formosa. In 1669 the Court of Directors began to transmit inquiries upon this subject, and in 1671 sent out an enlarged investment to Bantam, intimating their opinion that an advantageous trade might be carried on with Cambodia, Formosa, and Japan.* A factory had already been established at Tay-wan, in Formosa, with the sanction of its warlike ruler; but his heavy imposts, and the monopoly which he claimed of the best articles, rendered the traffic very unproductive. He professed, however, great friendship for the English, especially when they brought him a supply of cannon; and he made flattering promises, all of which were to be fulfilled when he should become master of the empire,—an event which he hoped was at no great distance. But the factors were little inclined to postpone their profits till that dubious era.† A better opening appeared at the flourishing port of Amoy, off the opposite coast. In 1677 a small vessel being sent thither, and making a very favourable report, a factory was in the following year ordered to be established, to which that at Tay-wan was made subordinate. The articles in request were chiefly flowered damasks and white

* Bruce's Annals, vol. ii. pp. 231, 282.

† Gutzlaff's History, vol. ii. p. 309-311. Bruce's Annals, vol. ii. p. 346.

satins; and the sum of *one hundred dollars* was ordered to be expended on the purchase of *tea.* In 1678-9 the investment for Tay-wan and Amoy amounted to 30,000 dollars in bullion and 20,000 in goods.* Some embarrassment was experienced when, several years after, the Tartars succeeded in reducing, first Amoy, and then Formosa; for the English, who had both traded with and supplied arms to its ruler, were regarded as in some degree his allies. However, after enduring a variety of exactions, they were enabled to maintain their factory at Amoy, and even to make it the sole one in this quarter, relinquishing that at Tay-wan as unprofitable.† Meantime tea was rapidly advancing in public estimation. On the 13th February 1684 the Directors wrote thus to Madras:—"In regard *thea* is grown to be a commodity here, and we have occasion to make presents therein to our great friends at court, we would have you to send us yearly five or six canisters of the very best and freshest thea. That which will colour the water in which it is infused most of a greenish complexion is generally best accepted."‡ The import for general use had, it appears, been chiefly a private concern of the officers; but the market had thereby been so much overstocked, that "trash thea from Bantam had been sold for 4d. and 6d a-pound."§ The trade was now, therefore, to be carried on altogether by the Company themselves. Its progress, however, was severely checked by the imposition, in 1689, of an enormous duty of 5s. a-pound,‖ which rendered it impossible to introduce with advantage

* Bruce's Annals, vol. ii. pp. 390, 396, 412, 426.
† Gutzlaff, vol. ii. p. 312. ‡ MS. Records.
§ Auber, p. 148. ‖ MS. Records. Auber, p. 149.

any teas except those of the very finest description. In 1693 the staple commodities are stated to have been Nan-king silks, damasks, satins, velvets, gold thread, raw silk, China and lacquered ware, a good quantity of fine tea, some fans and screens.* In 1699 there were ordered 300 tubs (chests) of the finer green teas, and eighty of bohea; and great caution was enjoined to avoid a risk, which we suspect to be chimerical, of its imbibing a smell from the tutenague boxes in which it was packed.†

In the same year the merchants resolved to prosecute their trade with the utmost vigour. In November they appointed a president, with a council of four, two factors, and five writers, under whose commercial jurisdiction were placed "the whole empire of China and the adjacent islands."‡ Catchpoole, the head of this board, having obtained information which led him to consider Tchu-san, the chief of the well-known group of islands of that name, as the most desirable spot, obtained a chop, or license to trade, and transmitted such favourable accounts, that the Company, in 1701, sent thither three vessels, with an investment of £101,300; while to Amoy they sent only a value of £34,400, and to Canton of £40,800. These brilliant prospects, however, were soon clouded. The president found that the chop, which he had understood to have conferred a permanent privilege, applied only to one particular cargo; while the arbitrary conduct of the mandarins, and the monopoly enjoyed by the merchants, enabled them to treat on what terms they pleased, and to fulfil them or not as they found convenient. In 1702 he was

* Bruce's Annals, vol. iii. p. 145. † Ibid. p. 304.
‡ Ibid. pp. 331, 332.

compelled to quit the place, leaving a large amount of valuable property which he could not remove. He was afterwards induced to return, by fair promises of restitution and hopes of an improved market; but all these prospects proved fallacious. The only hope of redress was by an embassy to the imperial court, the cost of which would be £10,000, and the issue uncertain. He considered it more eligible to open a communication through the missionaries, Fontanez and Gerbillon, to whom he offered, in return, a free passage to Europe when desired.* But his chief hope was soon restricted to a settlement on the island of Pulo-Condore, whither, in 1701, the Company had sent out thirty men, with instructions to erect a fort.† They soon, however, showed a disposition to relinquish it, observing, that it seemed to be, not a seat for English trade, but merely a place to which Chinese junks resorted. Catchpoole urged, in reply, that the goods brought by these vessels were as cheap as when procured in the ports on the mainland; while the transactions were carried on there more securely and comfortably, and without those ruinous losses that had been incurred at Tchusan and Amoy. He advised, therefore, to give up these settlements, and centre their whole traffic in this island; but the discussion was cut short by a tragical event. In 1705 the Malays, who composed the greater part of the garrison, instigated, as was suspected, by the people of Cochin-China, set fire to the warehouses, murdered the president and most of the English, and entirely destroyed the factory.‡

The Company had already acknowledged that

* Bruce's Annals, vol. iii. pp. 419, 453, 482, 527, 528.
† Ibid. pp. 453, 454. ‡ Ibid. pp. 554, 562, 580, 606.

"they were weary of the trade to Tchu-san and Amoy." Besides the severe losses sustained at the former place, An-qua, an Amoy merchant, owed 77,457 taels (above £25,000), of which it was reported that there was no prospect of recovering one penny.* They seem even to have once intended to forsake all those ports, and use Banjarmassin, in the island of Borneo, instead of Pulo-Condore, as a depôt to which goods might be brought by the junks. It was found, however, that at Canton, though the factors had reason for heavy complaints, the traffic could be conducted on a considerable scale, and the increasing importance of tea made them willing to encounter many difficulties. In 1703 orders were given for 75,000 lbs. singlo (green), 10,000 imperial, and 20,000 bohea (about the 300th part of that now annually imported), the Directors only doubting whether such a quantity could be procured in the empire. In 1706 it was intimated, that the chief profit of the voyage depended upon this article, and directions were given, that as much as could be got should be purchased: a hundred tons were accordingly shipped.† The factors, however, were exposed to various kinds of exaction. In 1702 appeared what "they call a new monster in trade,"—an individual who, by paying a large sum to the imperial treasury, procured an exclusive privilege to deal with the English,—a monopoly equally annoying to them and to the regular merchants. It proved, moreover, that this person had neither goods nor capital to trade with; so that all was at a stand till he consented, on receiving £1600 for each ship, to allow them to treat with

* Bruce's Annals, vol. iii. pp. 562, 567, 602. † MS. Records.

such of his countrymen as were possessed of more ample means. About the same time, a charge of four per cent. on the value of the cargoes, originally given in particular circumstances as a gratuity, was imposed upon them by the hoppo as a permanent tax.*

In 1715 this intercourse assumed the character of a regular trade. Ships were despatched from England at stated seasons, having each a supercargo to conduct the sales and purchases. These vessels proceeded first to Macao, and then to the mouth of the Bocca Tigris, where they sought an interview with the hoppo, and made the necessary stipulations. Their demands in that year were free trade, liberty to employ Chinese servants, to procure provisions and necessaries, exemption from duty on goods unsold, and from search; lastly, the abolition of the duty of four per cent. The functionary conceded every article except the last, but upon it he was immovable; and though the English made the utmost exertions to treat it as a *sine qua non*, they found it at last expedient "to let that argument drop."†

In 1720 the formidable confederacy of the Cohong first appeared, but only as a combination of private merchants endeavouring to procure a monopoly-price for their goods. Our countrymen refused to treat with them, and complained to the viceroy, when the parties were called into his presence and publicly reprimanded.‡ In 1728 the merchants were driven almost to despair by an addition of ten per cent. on their cargoes, while they were studiously excluded from all appeal to persons

* Auber, pp. 150, 151. † Ibid. p. 152-155. ‡ Ibid. p. 155.

in power. Yet, as on recent occasions, when a small party acted with determination, and paid no regard to any prohibition, they found little difficulty in penetrating even to the palace of the Tsong-tou or viceroy. This was twice effected during that disastrous year. On the first occasion they saw his excellency himself, and received some fair promises; but on the second, a chung-ya or subordinate mandarin was deputed to receive them. He treated them roughly, upbraiding them with their very unceremonious mode of entry; and on their threatening to leave Canton unless redress was obtained, said, "they might go if they pleased; other ships would come." He complained much of their troubling him about such a trifling affair. They replied, "that their trade, and the wrongs endured, were no trifles to them;" but he then told them, "they must apply to the merchants to get them a hearing." They answered very reasonably, "that, as the grievances arose from the merchants, how could it be supposed that they would become instruments in any just accusation against themselves: the present case witnessed they would not." To this no reply was made, but the chung-ya finally promised that he would order his people to adjust the disputed points in an equitable manner. He dismissed them with a strict injunction "never to trouble him again on such trifling occasions."*

In 1736 Kien-long ascended the throne, and opened his reign auspiciously, by the abolition of the oppressive duty of ten per cent. This important boon, however, was clogged with two very burdensome conditions; one, that the edict being read to the

* Auber, p. 158-161.

English in public, they should listen to it kneeling; the other, that immediately on a ship's arrival, all the guns and arms on board should be deposited in the hands of the mandarins. These terms being considered incompatible, the one with dignity and the other with security, were met with determined resistance. The genuflexion, after some discussion, was altogether waved; but, in order to escape the delivery of the arms, it was necessary to pay down a loan or bribe of 6000 taels (£2000). Having experienced the powerful effect of money, the factors endeavoured in a similar way to get rid of some of the other exactions, particularly the claim of 1950 taels (£650) on each ship, over and above the measurage-duty; but the Chinese, though not inflexible on other points, would never, unless by compulsion, make the slightest concession which affected their pecuniary interests.* About this time also commenced the security-system, from which the British trade has so severely suffered. A few merchants, called the Hong, were nominated, one of whom was required, on the arrival of every English ship, to become security for the regular payment of the duties; in return for which the representatives of the Company were obliged to allow him a corresponding advantage. These persons, burdened by the above obligation, and having also £10,000 to remit in presents to the imperial court, found it necessary to indemnify themselves by an exorbitant price laid on the commodities.†

The year 1742 was rendered memorable by the visit

* Auber, pp. 162, 163. Gutzlaff's History, vol. ii. p. 330. MS. Records.

† MS. Records. Gutzlaff's History, vol. ii. p. 333.

of Lord Anson, in the course of his eventful expedition round America and across the Pacific. His object was merely to refit and provision his vessel after the many hardships suffered during the voyage; yet his arrival was distinguished by some remarkable occurrences. The usual difficulties were made about allowing him to pass through the channel of the Bocca Tigris; permission was even refused to proceed up in a boat, till he announced his determination to employ force; when, according to their custom on such occasions, the Chinese yielded, though the mandarin and pilot chiefly concerned, were, it was said, severely punished. The Spanish prisoners on board were strictly examined; but, by candidly acknowledging themselves to have been taken in open war, they saved the commodore from the imputation of being a pirate. The factors dissuaded him from seeking an audience of the viceroy; while they, in the mean time, obtained leave to take on board water and provisions. A demand was made, but rejected, of the usual measurement-duties exacted from the Company's ships. Anson, finding that he was thwarted in his design of procuring supplies, determined, without regard to the advice of the agents, to solicit an audience of the viceroy. At this time a dreadful conflagration broke out in Canton, by which eleven streets and a hundred shops were destroyed, and the progress of the fire was mainly arrested by the voluntary exertions of the British seamen, who took down several edifices, which prevented it from spreading into other quarters. After such a signal service, the commander was admitted to the desired audience. He was accompanied by the English, Danish, and

Swedish supercargoes, and received by the viceroy with the greatest pomp, surrounded by 10,000 men under arms. In addressing this high officer, he pointed out the vexations under which the trade suffered, earnestly soliciting redress; but to this part of his speech no reply whatever was made. Permission, however, was granted to receive on board every thing necessary.*

The annoyances to which our people were subjected at Canton, induced them to make several efforts to re-open the communication with Amoy. Here, however, they fared still worse, and were exposed to even more arbitrary exactions.† All attempts of this kind were foreclosed by a decree, which Kien-long issued in 1757, strictly limiting European intercourse to Canton.‡ This made no change in the actual course of the English trade, which had long centred in that port; yet it acted unfavourably on the interests of the factory. Hitherto, amid all their grievances, the threat of removing to another place, and thus depriving the mandarins of the emoluments which they derived from the traffic, had been used with the most beneficial effect. Now, the only menace left to them was that of quitting China altogether,—a design which neither party could believe to be seriously entertained.

It happened somewhat unfortunately that, before this decree reached Europe, the Company had resolved upon making a most vigorous effort to re-open an intercourse with Ning-po and Tchusan. They ordered vessels to be sent to these ports;

* Anson's Voyage, 4to, p. 386-408.
† Gutzlaff's History, vol. ii. p. 314-316. ‡ Auber, p. 170.

and Mr Flint, at whose suggestion the scheme was undertaken, along with Mr Bevan, was to endeavour to obtain permission to reside for some time at Nan-king, and even, if possible, to make his way to Pe-king, in order to negotiate a commercial treaty. He was furnished with some large mirrors, as presents to the emperor, and also, it would appear, with money to be employed on an emergency in bribing the mandarins. Pursuant to these instructions, a vessel sailed in 1755 for Tchu-san, and one in 1757 for Ning-po.* From the latter place Mr Flint undertook a journey to court, the accounts of which are extremely imperfect; but he appears to have actually penetrated as far as Tien-sing, where he delivered a petition for free trade. On his return to Canton, in 1759, he was sent for, along with the supercargoes, to the palace of the viceroy. At the inner gate their swords were taken from them, and when brought into his excellency's presence, they were treated in the most brutal manner, being thrown on the ground in the attempt to make them perform the ceremony of ko-tou, to which, however, they would not submit. Mr Flint was then desired to advance, and an imperial edict, real or pretended, was read, ordering him to be banished three years to Macao, and then to quit China for ever, as a penalty for having violated the imperial decree, prohibiting the English from visiting Ning-po. He was placed in close and rigorous confinement, of which he bitterly complained in a letter to the supercargoes; stating, however, that the mandarin by whom he was guarded seemed disposed to set him at liberty on receiving a bribe of

* MS. Records.

800 taels (£250), which he recommended should be paid. Yet his liberation did not take place; though, in 1760, the Court of Directors sent a formal mission to the viceroy soliciting it, and, at the same time, the remission of the six per cent. duty, and that of the 1950 taels; not one of which requests was conceded. In November 1762 Mr Flint was released, on condition of immediately setting sail for his own country.*

Among other grievances, we may mention that, in 1754 and 1755, discussions took place on the subject of the security-merchants, the English soliciting that their business might be freed from this trammel. The only result was, that the monopoly was continued on a much more rigorous footing, the trade being entirely confined to those persons, and intercourse with all others strictly prohibited. After representations, indeed, which were continued during fifteen years, the factors, in 1770, procured an edict dissolving the confederacy of the Co-hong. In 1779, however, it again re-appeared under the simple title of the Hong; but the loss of its first syllable abated nothing of its pernicious influence,† which was aggravated by another circumstance. The very high rate of interest, which, as formerly observed, money bears in China, had tempted many British subjects to invest their funds in loans to natives of that empire. But as these last, though very prompt in accepting such advances, were very slow in discharging either principal or interest, while the laws afforded no means of enforcing payment, the debts swelled to the amount of a million sterling, which the borrowers seemed to

* Auber, p. 171-173. MS. Records.
† Ibid. pp. 168, 169, 178. MS. Records.

have very little intention of refunding. The Directors having received earnest representations on this subject from the lenders, authorized the supercargoes to use their influence to obtain a settlement. As their efforts, however, produced no effect, the council at Madras, where many of the creditors resided, empowered the captain of a king's ship to take up the negotiation, who, contrary to the advice of the supercargoes, went in person to present a remonstrance on this subject to the tsong-tou. The result was, that the emperor published an edict, ordering the debts to be paid, but intimating great displeasure at their having been contracted, and prohibiting any such transaction from taking place in future. To guard against it, he directed that no communication should henceforth be held between the British and the merchants, unless through the medium of certain mandarins whom he named. The dealers, alleging, doubtless with truth, that these officers would not perform this duty without a consideration, raised the prices of their teas, while they lowered those of the Company's imports.* The Hong monopoly, in spite of every remonstrance, has been ever since maintained; though it has undergone much practical mitigation. These privileged individuals have lent their name to others, called outside-merchants, who are thus enabled to traffic with the English. For this accommodation, however, a liberal compensation is of course exacted, which must be laid on the price of the goods.

From the middle of last century, the trade has been carried on under the same severe restrictions, and amid many disputes and grievances, yet still on

* Auber, pp. 180, 182, 183.

a continually-extending scale, till it has reached a magnitude truly astonishing. In 1711 the quantity of tea imported into Britain, and retained for home consumption, amounted to 142,000 lbs.; in 1720, to 238,000; in 1730, to 537,000; in 1740, to 1,302,000; in 1750, to 2,114,000; in 1760, to 2,293,000; in 1770, to 7,723,000; in 1780, only to 5,588,000; but in 1786, to 13,985,000. In 1800 it had risen to 20,358,000; in 1820, to 22,452,000; and in 1833, to 31,829,000. This wonderful progress certainly reflects great credit on the judicious arrangements made by the Company; so that, while coffee and chocolate have been chiefly used in other countries of Europe, tea has obtained in Britain a decided preference.

We shall proceed to mention a few of the principal differences between the two nations, which will tend to illustrate the character of the Chinese, and the course of policy pursued by the Company. In 1764 the king's ship Argo, laden with treasure, came to refit at Wham-poa, when the mandarins insisted on measuring her, and levying a corresponding duty. Captain Affleck claimed exemption, upon the precedent of Anson; but they replied, that the latter had been driven in by stress of weather, while he came voluntarily, for purposes connected with commerce. A long discussion ensued, in which the native authorities enforced their demand by the threat of entirely excluding the English from Canton. The supercargoes at length made a proposal, that the vessel should pay according to the measurement of the largest Company's ship; but this was repelled as altogether unreasonable, since, if she paid any duty, it ought to be on her own dimensions,

not on that of another vessel. After no less than four months' debate, Captain Affleck, at the request of the mercantile agents, yielded the point.

In 1784 the Lady Hughes, a ship from India, while firing a salute, caused the death of a native. There seems to have been great blame in using ball on such an occasion; and the authorities immediately sent to demand the delivery of the guilty individual. The committee replied, that it was difficult to discover who he was; that the gunner had probably absconded; and that they had no jurisdiction over Indian ships. The magistrates, however, persevered in their demand; and the supercargo of the Lady Hughes, having gone on shore to endeavour to explain the affair, was seized and thrown into prison. The English then took vigorous measures; the boats were armed and ordered up to the factory; and they obtained the co-operation of the other European merchants, who considered such a precedent extremely dangerous. The Chinese, however, would not release the prisoner till the gunner had been delivered up; and though the officers were desired not to be uneasy as to his fate, yet, on the 8th January 1785, it was announced, that by order of the emperor he had been strangled; which was represented as a very lenient measure after so great an outrage. This punishment, however, seemed very severe, both because the offender had undergone no regular trial, and because his crime, at worst, could be considered only as manslaughter. The Company appear to have been rather disinclined to prosecute the matter; and it was viewed as a kind of redress, that a British seaman having about this time been shot by a native, it was stated, and there was reason

to believe, that the punishment of strangulation was actually inflicted on the murderer.*

In 1792 the Company, hoping to improve their relations with China, requested the government to send an embassy, which was fitted out accordingly, and Lord Macartney placed at its head. A full account has elsewhere been given of its reception and result. The ambassador met with the utmost respect and attention; but all his movements were most strictly watched, and his mission was treated as one undertaken to pay homage to the ruler of the Celestial Empire, not with a view to negotiation. No new privilege was granted; yet the factors experienced, on the whole, somewhat better treatment, which was perhaps chiefly owing to the good offices of the new viceroy, who, as we have seen, accompanied Lord Macartney on his return from Hang-tcheou-fou, and behaved to him in a manner particularly friendly.†

The breaking out of the revolutionary war, first with France and then with Holland, increased the difficulties of the Company, as their fleets became exposed to an active system of privateering. Their vessels, however, being fully armed, defended themselves often with signal prowess and success. For instance, in 1804, the homeward China fleet, consisting of sixteen sail, beat off a French squadron under Admiral Linois; thus saving an amount of property estimated at upwards of sixteen millions sterling. Yet the progress of this contest threatened to involve even the Chinese in that desolating war, which from Europe had spread so widely over America and Asia.‡ In 1808 intelligence was received

* Auber, pp. 176, 183-188. † Ibid. p. 203. ‡ Ibid. p. 211.

of a considerable French force being off Java, and rumours prevailed of their intention to occupy Macao, which was in a very defenceless state. It was thought expedient to anticipate them in this design; and Lord Minto, then governor-general of India, instructed Admiral Drury to throw a body of troops into the place, provided it could be done without involving Britain in a war with China. The admiral having arrived off Canton, consulted the Select Committee, whether, before landing the troops, he should apply to the native authorities for permission. But that body, apparently desirous of the measure, yet aware that it had no chance of being assented to, decided that the troops should be landed immediately, notwithstanding the opposition of the Governor of Macao. Successive letters were then received from the hoppo and the viceroy, remonstrating in the strongest terms against this step, and threatening, unless the troops were withdrawn, to put an immediate stop to the trade, and even to burn the ships at Wham-poa. Troops were ordered down, and all the natives employed by the English were commanded to quit their service. The dread of the French was treated as a futile pretext, since that people, it was certain, would never dare to attack any part of the Celestial Empire; or if they did, its warlike soldiers would speedily sweep them from its surface. Yet, in defiance of these threats, a second division was landed on the 20th October, and the committee expressed their determination not to give way to the Chinese, "so long as they persevered in their haughty conduct." An audience of the viceroy was repeatedly solicited: this, however, was declared to be wholly unnecessary, there

being no room for any treaty or compromise, but a simple and absolute necessity for the immediate departure of the troops. The admiral then intimated to the committee, that having been urged into a course of which he disapproved, he must now guard against advancing a step further, "as the sword is half out of the scabbard, and his duty forbids him making war with China." The president, however, remained firm; and, on the 19th November, announced his intention of causing all British subjects to quit Canton, and of bringing the ships lower down the river. The viceroy, in consequence, issued a declaration, that no opposition would be made to their departure, but that they must not expect to be permitted to return. Troops meanwhile were seen encamping on the surrounding hills, and fire-vessels were prepared to be driven against the Company's shipping. On the 4th December the committee and mandarins met at Macao, when an edict from the emperor, to whom the affair had been referred, was read, demanding the removal of the soldiers as the only condition on which any trade could be permitted; but the English were still informed, that "obedience to the laws would settle every thing." As the president, however, still maintained the same determined attitude, the batteries began to open upon the British ships, one of which was obliged to return the fire. Another camp was seen on the heights, and the viceroy wrote a final letter, stating "that all debts would be paid; but while there remained a single soldier in Macao, and the laws were disobeyed, they should not trade," and "that if they hesitated a moment, innumerable troops would be sent to destroy them." The crisis

having now arrived, without the slightest concession on the part of the government, the president, seeing that he must either push matters to extremity or yield every thing, determined on the latter alternative; and, by a convention concluded on the 10th, the troops on the 15th began their embarkation. It is certainly much to be regretted that the English should have persevered in such a measure, while they were not prepared, nor indeed permitted, to employ the only means by which it could have been carried into effect. The British name was lowered, while extraordinary exultation was felt by the Chinese, who erected a pyramid commemorating their victory over the barbarian troops.*

The next collision between the two nations had a somewhat more satisfactory issue. War having broken out with the United States, his majesty's ship Doris, in 1814, captured the American ship Hunter, and brought her into Macao Roads. The mandarins loudly complained of this proceeding as a violation of their territory. In the course of the discussions, they declared that the European ships must return to their respective countries, "if they overstep their own proper duties, and create a disturbance in the least degree on the shores of the Celestial Empire;" and at another time it was observed, "If the English and Americans have petty quarrels, let them go to their own country and settle them." The committee urged, that the capture had taken place beyond the limits of Chinese jurisdiction, and that they had no control over a king's ship; but it was replied, that the government knew only the committee, with whom the vessels

* Auber, p. 230-236. Gutzlaff's History, vol. ii. p. 346-349.

which came to protect their trade had evidently a very close connexion. They thereupon not only stopped the intercourse, but recalled all the natives in the Company's service, and even broke into the factory to seize them: they also insulted one of the captains, and arrested the accredited linguist. As nearly six months, however, elapsed, and the English still made no concession, but were preparing a strong remonstrance on the treatment with which they had been visited, intimation was given of a wish to settle matters in an amicable manner. An arrangement was in consequence made, that Sir George Staunton, accompanied by Sir Theophilus Metcalfe and Mr Davis, should meet with a party of mandarins. Repeated conferences were held; but as they were abruptly broken off by the viceroy, Sir George had recourse to the most decisive measures, directing the ships to move down the river, and ordering all British subjects to quit Canton. This produced a speedy effect; in a few days the Hong-merchants came and entreated him to stop these proceedings, until the viceroy should have time to depute persons in order to adjust the points in dispute. After indulging in some heavy complaints, Sir George consented; the meeting took place in the president's apartment, when the Chinese adopted a mild and almost humble tone. The affair of the Doris appears to have been dropt, and the discussion related entirely to complaints made by the British, not of recent, but of old grievances. A more direct access to the viceroy, the unmolested use of native servants, and suitable accommodation for shipping, formed their chief demands. A satisfactory decision was soon obtained on each of these points; and on the 2d

December, the concessions were embodied in a decree.* The trade then resumed its usual course, and the issue disclosed to our countrymen their possession of a power of which they had been before unconscious. They had hitherto given credit to the professions of the native rulers, who represented the trade as an object to them utterly insignificant, and which they were prepared to sacrifice, whenever it could not be carried on exactly according to their rules and inclination. The threat of stopping it was always resorted to as the most effectual means of gaining any favourite object. But, in fact, the magnitude to which this intercourse had now attained rendered it very important, if not to the whole empire, at least to Canton and the adjoining districts. The mandarins drew from it large sums in the form of duties and exactions; the viceroy, from its produce, could remit a considerable revenue to the imperial exchequer, the cessation of which would be sensibly felt; and the destitution of numerous individuals who now derived from it their subsistence would excite popular discontent, perhaps commotion. For these evils the local authorities, according to Chinese maxims, would be made responsible, with little inquiry whether, or how far, they were really blamable. Hence, however ready they had been to use this threat in order to gain their ends, so soon as the foreigners appeared disposed to take them at their word, they instantly changed their tone; and all the power in negotiation connected with this motive was henceforth transferred to the English, who, it must be owned, employed it not without dread lest the others should really allow them to depart, and

* Auber, p. 241-251.

the Company be involved in the ruinous loss of breaking up so great an establishment.

The annoyance sustained on this occasion induced the Directors to send, in 1816, a second embassy under Lord Amherst, the events and unfavourable issue of which have been already related. The displeasure which that nobleman and his attendants incurred on that occasion at the imperial court seems to have emboldened the provincial authorities to treat them with greater insolence. The ship which had conveyed his lordship was not allowed to take in a cargo till after a long and troublesome discussion;* and the Alceste frigate, which had accompanied the same mission, having asked leave to ascend the river, was peremptorily refused. Notwithstanding this, Captain Maxwell caused her to move up in defiance of the prohibition, when she was fired at from the batteries, which were immediately silenced by a single broadside.† The Company henceforth, as elsewhere observed, gave up the idea of seeking any relief by an appeal to Pe-king, and trusted altogether to the means which they possessed of influencing the local government.

The next serious collision took place in 1822. Captain Richardson, of his majesty's ship Topaze, landed a party on the island of Lintin, who were attacked by a superior body of Chinese. In the conflict which ensued fourteen of the British were wounded; and to extricate them, it was thought necessary to fire, when four of the natives were hurt, and one killed. The captain, having called on the viceroy for redress, was informed that a strict inquiry would be made on the spot, coupled with

* Auber, p. 265-271. † Ibid. p. 271-273.

a demand that the wounded English should be sent on shore for examination. He replied, that he would allow a mandarin to come on board to see them, but would not land them, nor even suffer a judicial inquiry to be held in his ship. The other answered, that unless the men were surrendered, the members of the factory would be made responsible, without regard to their plea of not being able to control a king's vessel. Upon this the trade was stopped; and the committee, with the ships, moved down the river. As soon as the authorities found matters carried so far, they began to lower their tone, declaring it was not by their order that the English were leaving China. At last they sent a mandarin on board the Topaze, who appeared to be satisfied with his observations on the wounded seamen. As the original demand, however, was still urged, two members of the committee thought it advisable to carry their threat into execution, and depart; but the president paused on the brink of so momentous a step, and determined to remain for a little time. Captain Richardson then sailed, in defiance of the viceroy's prohibition; but an intimation was left, that the whole affair would be reported to his majesty, and judged according to British law. His excellency hereupon issued an edict, accepting this explanation, and allowing the trade to be resumed. In 1827, however, he gave orders to ascertain "when the vessel had returned to Britain with the foreign murderers, and at what time they had been executed." The Hong, having come to make this inquiry, were informed that the commander, on his arrival at home, had been tried by a court-martial,

but honourably acquitted; and that a letter had been written communicating this intelligence to the viceroy, which they might take to him if they pleased. In the greatest alarm, they deprecated such a step, and suggested that the committee, as circumstances stood, might easily fabricate such a statement as would be agreeable to him. As these gentlemen, however, refused to state any thing but the truth, the merchants undertook to manage the affair themselves, and succeeded in satisfying the viceroy; following, as we suspect, the course which they had thought proper to suggest.*

The years 1829 and 1830 were marked by a series of vexatious discussions, excited, apparently, less by Chinese encroachment, than by a strong desire entertained by the committee to liberate themselves from certain annoyances to which they had long been exposed. The entry-duty of 2780 dollars on every vessel, which had not fallen heavy on the large ships from Europe, was almost prohibitory on the small craft which carried on the traffic with India. The refusal of permission to the English to bring their wives and families to Canton, and to use sedan-chairs, the only commodious vehicle which could be procured, was resented as a grievance. The exactions, too, levied from the Hong-merchants, by which several of them had been reduced to bankruptcy, greatly embarrassed the trade.† The committee seem to have been chiefly encouraged to assume a high tone by recent observations on the radical weakness of the native government, and the facility with which they yielded

* Auber, pp. 288, 305, 311, 314, 315.
† Ibid p. 319. Gutzlaff's History, vol. ii. p. 333.

to displays of superior power. By a repetition of these, it was conceived that they might be overawed into granting any reasonable demand. Application was made for a naval force from Bengal; but the governor-general declined interfering, and referred them to the Directors at home.* They had at one time formed, and even announced their resolution to stop the trade and leave China; but this design was not carried into execution.† The natives acceded to the wishes of the English so far as to create new Hong-merchants in the room of those who had become insolvent.‡ But every other demand was repelled with their usual determination, and even with contumely. In their replies and proclamations, the following expressions occur:—"Since the said foreigners come to trade, it is incumbent on them to obey implicitly the orders of government. If they dislike the restrictions, it is perfectly competent to them not to take the trouble to come from so great a distance."—"The contemptuous resistance of the foreigners arises from no other than a special design to coerce us by the circumstances of their paying much duty. The Celestial Empire views these duties as really not of the importance of a fibre or particle of dust."—"How can the chief Baynes (the president of the Select Committee) resist the prohibition and orders, and bring with him a barbarian woman (Mrs Baynes) to Canton! If she will remove early to Macao, he will avoid a severe scrutiny. As to sitting in sedan-chairs, it is in itself a small business; but foreigners

* Auber, pp. 328, 329.
† Gutzlaff's History, vol. ii. p. 394-398. Auber, p. 326-354.
‡ Auber, p. 327.

being in the provincial city, have hitherto not been allowed to ascend sedan-chairs. The said foreigners, ignorant how to be excited to gratitude, turn round, and because of the proclamations disallowing them to bring barbarian women to Canton, and to sit in sedan-chairs, present whining petitions."—"The flowery nation and the barbarians must be distinctly divided; between those inside and outside there must be erected a great boundary."—"It is incumbent on the said chief and others to take the authoritative decisions that have been issued, and promulgate them for information. Why do they again, and a third time, obstinately refuse to transmit those injunctions, and dun us with requests to give a written document in return? Exceedingly does it indicate refractory stupidity."—"Hereafter it will be absolutely necessary to yield implicit obedience to the laws and regulations of the Celestial Empire, and adhere strictly to old arrangement. If, again, any dare to oppose or transgress, and again create disturbance, then, assuredly, in immediate adherence to the imperial will, a severe scrutiny will be made, and punishment inflicted. Decidedly there will not be the least clemency or forbearance shown. Tremble at this! Intensely, intensely are these commands given!"*

The Court of Directors, on these transactions being reported to them, disapproved so entirely of the conduct and views of their agents, that they came to the unanimous resolution of appointing a new committee. They decidedly abjured every intention of coercing the Chinese by threatening measures. In

* Auber, pp. 332, 323, 326. Gutzlaff's History, vol. ii. pp. 385-387, 401, 397.

a subsequent despatch, in 1832, they say,—" The commerce between Great Britain and China is too important to be put to hazard without the most urgent and imperious necessity, and on no account upon considerations of a personal nature. It is a notion too commonly entertained and acted on by you, and encouraged by foreign merchants residing at Canton, that nothing is to be gained from the Chinese by obedience to their laws and edicts, but that much may be obtained by intimidation. You may have succeeded for the moment in setting the government at defiance; but that government has not only taken the first opportunity to assert its dominion, but also, with the view of making you feel the consequences of disobedience, it has almost invariably deprived you of some advantages which it had either tacitly or avowedly yielded to friendly remonstrances."*

The opening of an extensive contraband trade in opium formed a memorable era in the annals of Chinese commerce. Even in 1793 Mr Barrow found this fascinating drug very generally indulged in by the opulent, though the price placed it beyond the reach of the poorer classes; and its importation has of late been vastly increased, chiefly by the country-ships from British India. They at first carried on their traffic at the ordinary anchorage at Wham-poa; but the complaints of the government were so loud, that the Company's servants thought themselves obliged to co-operate in excluding the smugglers from that station. They then anchored outside the river, and, finally, in 1821, chose a position off the neighbouring island of Lintin, which

* Auber, pp. 330, 358, 359.

became the seat of a most extensive trade. The Chinese authorities, seemingly from good motives, issued the most rigorous prohibitions against the introduction of opium, saying on one occasion,—"If there exist a drug destructive of life, incessant efforts should be made to keep it at a distance. Having used the drug for some time, the men accustomed to it can by no means relinquish it; their faces become as sharp as sparrows', and their heads sunk between the shoulders in the form of a dove; the poison flows into their inmost vitals; physic cannot cure their disease; repentance comes too late for reform." In the face of these anathemas, however, the mandarins not only became the purchasers and consumers of the illicit commodity, but entered into the trade with the view of sharing in its ample profits. Even revenue-cutters have, it is said, been employed in its conveyance. Hence, the English ships regularly engaged in this traffic, which at first did not exceed two, have augmented to thirty-five, and form a sort of floating colony, established on the Chinese coast. They now bring other articles besides opium; and the transactions at Lintin are estimated at present to be of equal magnitude with those at Wham-poa.*

About this time, also, an earnest desire began to be felt to re-open the long-suspended communication with the flourishing havens on the eastern coast, where a wider market might be afforded for imported commodities, while tea and silk, in the places of their production, might be obtained on more advantageous terms. The first attempt was made in 1823 by Mr Matheson, an English gentleman acting as

* Gutzlaff's History, vol. ii. p. 372-380.

Danish consul at Canton, who sailed to Namoa, an island at the eastern extremity of the province, touched at Fou-tcheou-fou and Amoy, and remained for some time in Chin-tcheou Bay. As usual, he in vain solicited the sanction of the authorities; and, from causes which the brevity of the narrative renders it difficult to trace, his voyage was unproductive. He was not discouraged, however, but sent the vessel back the same year, when it succeeded in opening a very profitable trade at Ta-ho, a port situated a few miles to the westward of Namoa. A second ship was equally successful; but the mandarins then took such violent measures, —burning the houses of such as had traded with the foreigners,—that those which followed were unable to effect any sales. The same gentleman sent afterwards a vessel to Amoy and Formosa, which was unsuccessful; but the causes of failure are not stated. Next year (1824), one despatched to the latter place was so fortunate as to dispose of all her cargo. Notwithstanding this, these enterprises were for some years suspended.*

In the end of 1831 Mr Innes, a member of the factory at Canton, undertook, in the Jamesina, an adventure along the eastern coast. After visiting Chin-tcheou Bay and Amoy, he entered the river Min, and made an attempt to open a regular trade at Fou-tcheou-fou. Having reached that city, he at first obtained promises from some of the inferior mandarins; but, after a good deal of equivocation, a mandate was finally issued declaring all traffic of foreign ships at that town to be directly contrary to imperial orders. The attempt to do business at

* Gutzlaff's History, vol. ii. p. 369-371.

this port proved therefore abortive. Yet he found means to dispose of opium to the value of 330,000 dollars, at prices superior to those usually obtained at Canton, as well as of a small quantity of woollens and calicoes. This sale must have taken place at Chin-tcheou Bay and Amoy, where Mr Innes is stated to have proceeded upon the principle of avoiding rather than inviting the notice of the mandarins.*

In 1832 a measure of a more decisive nature was adopted under the auspices of the Select Committee itself. Mr Marjoribanks, its president, determined upon fitting out an expedition, to make a fair experiment whether any of the great emporia on the eastern coast, lying nearer to its most central and richest provinces, could be opened to British enterprise. The ship Lord Amherst was prepared, with a crew of seventy men, commanded by Captain Rees, a good seaman and skilful draftsman. The commercial transactions, with the negotiations leading to them, were intrusted to Mr Lindsay, one of the supercargoes, a gentleman who combined polished and conciliating manners with decision of character and enthusiasm in the cause. He was accompanied by Mr Gutzlaff, to whom we have already alluded as one inspired with ardent zeal to communicate Divine truth to the people of China, and who had acquired such a complete knowledge of their language, literature, and the maxims of their sages, that he was fitted to converse with the most intelligent among them, without being distinguished from a native. Mr Lindsay was instructed to act with caution, without even intimating that he had the authority of the Company, and

* Auber, p. 359-361.

using force only in self-defence; but his proceedings will prove that it was not necessary to be extremely fastidious as to the means by which his intentions might be carried into effect. This enterprise, indeed, laboured under two defects in a commercial view,—ignorance of the quality of tea on the part of its conductor, and the want of opium, the article for which the Chinese always make the most eager inquiry. But, in point of fact, the object was not so much the actual trade now to be carried on, as the experiment whether the native merchants would be disposed and permitted to open an intercourse with the English. This voyage, on the whole, threw so much light on the condition of the great eastern ports, the character of the Chinese, their mode of traffic, and the prospects of an extended communication with them, that we shall exhibit a pretty full view of its transactions, as well as of those of the Sylph, which soon after followed in the same track.*

The party sailed on 26th February; but thirty days were spent in coasting along the province of Quang-tung, the vessel being retarded by alternate fogs and calms. This shore presented not the gay and smiling aspect which distinguishes so large a portion of the Chinese empire. The land was bordered generally by ranges of naked and precipitous rocks, sometimes by hills of sand; and the soil was barren, though cultivated with extreme care. The popula-

* Report of Proceedings on a Voyage to the Northern Ports of China, in the Ship Lord Amherst, 8vo, 1834. Gutzlaff's Journal of Three Voyages along the Coast of China, 8vo, 1834. The narrative of the voyage of the Amherst is chiefly drawn from Mr Lindsay's Report, with some supplementary information from Mr Gutzlaff.

tion was every where overflowing, and derived subsistence in a great measure from commerce and fishery. As these resources did not suffice, they had recourse to emigration; and government, in favour at least of the male inhabitants, had relaxed the rigour of its prohibitory law against natives leaving the country. Hence great numbers from this quarter have occupied and greatly improved Siam, Malacca, and the Oriental Islands. They set out commonly in very indigent circumstances, and suffer great distress on their first arrival; but many accumulate considerable property, with which they return to their native province. They are a hardy, enterprising race, imbued with independent, and almost republican ideas, and are accordingly viewed with jealousy by the authorities. The villages are placed in bold and striking situations, amid precipitous cliffs, partly crowned with trees. Both in them and in the country, to which they made short excursions, the English were treated with the utmost kindness and cordiality; their approach was hailed with joy; and crowds assembled around them, contending with each other for the pleasure of receiving the strangers into their cottages. When invited in return to inspect the ship, the people were equally surprised and delighted. They were particularly gratified by Mr Gutzlaff's intimate knowledge of their language and customs, and could not be persuaded that he was not a native. They derived also much benefit from his medical aid, and even the poorest were anxious to show their gratitude by some trifling present.

At the boundary of Quang-tung, the navigators visited the island of Nan-gaou, or Namoa, on which

is Nan-tsze (the Nan-ciam of the Portuguese), an important naval station, the residence of the Tsung-ping-kwan or admiral, who holds jurisdiction over this province and that of Fo-kien. On coming into contact with official characters, they found an interruption of their cordial welcome. They were refused admission into the war-junks; and a trading captain, who invited them into his vessel, was severely reprimanded by several mandarins who came on board; yet, after some discussion, even these were gained over, and finally said,—"We shall report you to be well-disposed persons, who thoroughly understand the rules of propriety." An alarm, it appears, had spread along the coast, that the Amherst was a ship of war, the precursor of an invading fleet, which was soon to arrive at Canton.

On the 28th March they entered on the coast of Fo-kien, which presented a continuance of the same steril and rocky aspect; and having passed by several islands which had lately been the strongholds of pirates, on the 2d of April they arrived at Amoy. This port, as formerly observed, may be considered the centre of the trading and shipping interest of China; and, as it was to be the first object of this commercial experiment, peculiar circumspection was requisite. The river being deep enough to allow vessels to anchor close to the city, they took their station opposite a temple, and soon perceived that their arrival had caused an extraordinary sensation. From a mandarin-boat they heard a joyful cry,—"Oh, she's a trader!" but, in the course of half an hour, three distinct parties of officers, belonging to the civil, the military, and the customhouse departments, came successively on board.

The question was speedily put to our countrymen, whether they came to trade. It was thought prudent to answer that their destination was Japan; they had put in here to obtain a supply of provisions and water; but they would gladly engage in traffic. This was immediately stated to be out of the question, being strictly prohibited by the laws of the Celestial Empire. Meantime troops were seen drawn up along the shore, while two mandarins, in great state, repaired to an adjoining temple. Two officers then came out, and offered to them a gratuitous supply of every thing wanted, but stated, that they must quit the coast immediately, and without holding any communication with the people. Mr Lindsay complained of the inhospitality of this reception, and declined receiving any thing without paying for it. In the course of the afternoon, the ship was surrounded by boats filled with well-dressed people, who expressed the most friendly feelings, and made inquiries relative to trade; but they were rudely driven away by the revenue-officers.

Next day, although the whole shore was lined with troops, and displayed a bustle like that of warlike preparation, Messrs Lindsay and Gutzlaff, in spite of earnest entreaties to the contrary, landed, and, without opposition, walked through the town. They were, however, constantly attended by a body of soldiers, acting professedly as a guard of honour, though evidently designed to watch their motions, and, if possible, prevent any communication with the citizens. In this they were disappointed; for a number of respectable individuals contrived to intimate that they would most willingly engage in traffic were they not obstructed by the government-officers, who

would not even allow them to visit the ship. Amoy was found to contain a number of handsome houses, though many parts of it were filthy. After an hour's ramble they returned to the vessel, but next morning found themselves still more closely hemmed in by war-junks, which took the most violent measures to prevent any native from approaching. Many poor creatures were cruelly beaten on the mere charge of "looking at the barbarian ship." At length, on a board, placed in front of a boat, was displayed in large characters,—

"The Te-tuh of Amoy hereby issues a clear proclamation. The barbarian ship is ordered to set sail and depart. She is not allowed to anchor and loiter about. The boats and natives of this place are prohibited from approaching or having any intercourse whatever with her." A deputation soon after came on board, with an edict stating the positive orders from court, that the barbarian vessel, reported to be on the coast, "must immediately be driven away; they are not permitted to remain and delay for a single moment." It was added,—"The prohibitions of the Celestial Empire are severe in the extreme. Its fixed laws do not permit them to cast anchor, and it is absolutely necessary that they set sail on this very day."

The bearers, however, of this imperious mandate abjured every hostile feeling, and made even lavish professions of amity; and when reproached that their actions corresponded so ill with their words, they at length consented to an audience taking place with the te-tuh in the temple. The jealousy of the officers was, however, shown by the arrival of troops, and the mounting of several guns, though these last,

being without carriages, were wholly unserviceable. Shortly after noon they were invited to land, and marched between two rows of soldiers, consisting of 500 men, drawn up in single files to make the greater appearance; while the beach and adjoining hills were crowded with spectators. Being led into the great hall of the temple, they found, seated in a circle, ten mandarins, the principal of whom bore the titles of Te-tuh and Tsung-ping. Considerable difficulty was felt as to the ceremonial, in consequence of the low estimation in which the mercantile character is held. When this was adjusted, their requests were stated, which were simply to receive supplies of water and provisions, upon being allowed to pay for them. The te-tuh showed a disposition to gratify their desires, which was eagerly thwarted by the tsung-ping, who appeared actuated by the most bitter hostility. He engaged in an altercation with Mr Gutzlaff, whom he accused of using the plea of want as a veil for some sinister purpose; and when told that he need not fear the non-fulfilment of their engagements, he said in a tone of the utmost contempt, "*Fear* you! fear *you!*" That gentleman, however, made an answer at once firm and judicious; the demands of the English were finally granted, and a *comprador* appointed, through whom their affairs were to be transacted.

They remained for a few days at Amoy, during which they made repeated excursions into the country, without obstruction or molestation. They were, indeed, constantly attended by a guard, professedly for honour and protection, but who laboured to prevent them from coming into contact with the natives. The Chinese, however, crowded round them, listened with delight to Mr Gutzlaff's conversation,

and expressed the most friendly disposition. This, contrasted with the rudeness, and often insult, to which the English are exposed at Canton, suggested the somewhat mortifying reflection, that they were least liked where they were best known; but they were willing to find a better reason for an antipathy which is confined in fact to the lowest of the populace. The people were of the same class as on the neighbouring coast; and their habits of life, while they communicated an energy unknown to the rest of their countrymen, darkened also some features of the national character. The extensive emigrations, as they diminished greatly the prospect of obtaining for the daughters that indispensable requisite, a husband, caused the crime of child-murder to be committed more extensively than elsewhere, and in a manner peculiarly remorseless. Mr Gutzlaff having expressed his horror at seeing the murdered body of a fine infant lying on the beach, the bystanders answered with indifference,—"It is only a girl!" The people are also remarkably superstitious, having numerous idols, particularly Ma-tsoo-po, Queen of Heaven, to whom they have recourse for protection amid the vicissitudes of their adventurous life. The missionary could not meet with a single Christian, though there was said to be a Spanish station in the neighbourhood. Several religious and moral tracts, however, were received with gratitude, and hopes may be entertained of their producing ultimate good. Copies were also distributed of a little work composed by Mr Marjoribanks, attempting to correct the erroneous ideas respecting England and the English character which were circulated by the Chinese government.

The Amoy authorities had ceased to press the departure of their visiters; but as their anxious desire for it had in no degree abated, they endeavoured to hasten it by a most singular and mean contrivance. A sailor in one of the junks, who had renewed with Mr Gutzlaff an old acquaintance formed in Tartary, was sent on board the Amherst, in the capacity of comprador, and rendered responsible for her proceeding without delay. If he should not succeed, corporal punishment was to be inflicted upon him; while the sailing of his junk was to be stopped, by which he would be exposed to the wrath of all his shipmates. The poor man represented, in the most pathetic terms, the calamity which impended over him, and implored them in pity to take their departure; and Mr Lindsay, who had really formed the resolution to go next day, thought proper to relieve him by stating his intention.

After leaving this place, they steered southwards, and passed the Piscadores, noted for the obstinate efforts made by the Dutch to form an establishment there. These islands are so extremely barren, that the utmost industry of the colonists cannot exempt them from dependence for a supply of rice upon Formosa. They contain excellent harbours, however, and the Chinese keep them strongly garrisoned, with the view of securing their command over that important island. Captain Rees next proceeded to a port on the Formosan coast, whose naked surface, covered with sand, gave little promise of the fertility which renders that island the granary of Fo-kien; but the gentlemen on board had a distant view of the mountains, whence rise those streams by which it is enriched. No obstruction to trade

is mentioned; but before the merchants, who were at some distance, could arrive, Mr Lindsay, having spent two days there, thought it necessary to depart. No traces of Christianity could be found, though the Dutch, during their residence, were said to have made a considerable number of converts.

The Amherst now sailed back to the coast of China; but several circumstances deterred the commander from any attempt to touch at the great port of Chin-tcheou. A course was taken through a channel inside the island of Hai-tan (in the narrative called Kee-tan), amid a labyrinth of islets that would have required a much better chart than any with which the crew were provided. Admiral Wan, who commanded in this district, gave them a less friendly reception than they had yet met with. His first address was,—"Where do you come from? What is your nation? What business have you here? You must begone instantly!" Endeavours were made to convey to him some adequate idea of the importance of the country to which they belonged; but he exclaimed,—"Nonsense! the great English nation! the petty English nation, you should say. You tell lies to me." As Mr Lindsay hereupon gave some indications of an intention to turn him out of the cabin, he began to make apologies; and his countrymen, who set great value upon decorous conduct, excused him by saying, that his intellects had been so affected by the use of opium as to make him scarcely responsible for what he said.

On the 21st April the Amherst was opposite the entrance of the river of Fou-tcheou-fou, which was the next grand object of the expedition; and

pilots, induced by the promise of twenty dollars, guided them over the sand-banks which encumber it. They now found themselves in a beautiful country, broken into hills, partly naked, partly cultivated in terraces, and covered with extensive tea-plantations. As soon as the vessel was seen at anchor, the natives hastened in boats, and crowded the deck in such numbers, that strict regulations, to which they readily conformed, were necessary to prevent disorder. Two men of respectable appearance invited the strangers on shore, where they were received, as usual, with the utmost courtesy, and their books joyfully accepted. Nor were they permitted to return till they had partaken of a handsome banquet in the public hall of the village, amidst an immense crowd, many of whom mounted even the rafters to obtain a view of them.

As no mandarin, nor any messenger from Foutcheou-fou had yet appeared, Mr Lindsay determined to quit the ship, and go up in the boat to that capital. The river, called Min, was found a magnificent expanse, from whose banks the mountains rose in some places to the height of several thousand feet; and the scenery, which is highly beautiful, bears a striking resemblance to that which borders the Rhine. Many forts crowned the cliffs, but in so ruinous a state, that their only use was to render the scene more picturesque. Min-gan alone, where the stream narrows to a quarter of a mile, formed a military station, and some attempts were made at this point to stop their progress; but they outsailed all the boats sent in pursuit of them. A little above, the river parted into two wide branches, and by the northern one they went up to the city. Having immediately

landed, and inquired for the viceroy's residence, they passed the magnificent bridge so much admired by the Spaniards, and in fact celebrated over the empire. It rests on thirty-three arches, composed of huge piles of granite, supporting enormous transverse blocks. The length is 420 yards, the breadth fourteen feet, part of which space is occupied by shops; but Chinese bridges, as formerly observed, are only adapted for foot-passengers. They walked on quickly, followed by an immense crowd, and after passing through a mile and a half of suburb, and a quarter of a mile within the city, they were ushered into the public office of the che-hien, the doors being immediately shut behind them. The astonishment of the assembled officials at this sudden entrance of a body of foreigners could with difficulty be described. The party were assailed on all sides with inquiries, and obliged to give in a written report of their respective names and surnames. Mr Lindsay then delivered a petition previously prepared, in which, though he held forth Japan as his ultimate object, he intimated his being possessed of a supply of goods, with which he was desirous of carrying on trade. After some discussion, the answer was deferred till next day, and they were meantime promised good accommodation in the vicinity of their boat. Being led, however, to the bank, Whang, a mandarin with a crystal button, after surveying them superciliously by the light of a torch, caused them to be conducted to a vessel in the middle of the river. They found it to be a common trading-boat, crowded with people of the lowest class; upon which they crossed the current, and entered the custom-house,

avowing their intention of making it their lodging for the night. Whang declaring this to be out of the question, an old Tartar mandarin led them into a spacious office adjoining, which happened to be unoccupied. The former soon followed, vociferating that such a place could on no account be tenanted by barbarians, adding,—"Go back to your own boat and stay there; we will send you some food." Under this treatment, the supercargo determined to assume that high tone which he had repeatedly found effective. After reproaching the mandarin for such illiberal conduct, says he, "I plainly intimated that I would stay and sleep in the very hall where I was, in defiance of him, and that, if they would not give us food, we had provisions of our own. In order to prove we were in earnest, a large table was brought from a corner of the room, on which we laid out our stores, and seated ourselves round it in the centre of the astonished conclave of mandarins." Whang tried both entreaties and threats to induce them to move, promising, at last, comfortable lodgings in the immediate neighbourhood, but received only one answer, "that we meant to stay where we were." This course succeeded; several of the mandarins showed a very friendly disposition, and even their enemy endeavoured now to carry his point by fair means. They made good their quarters; and next morning he conversed with them in quite an altered tone, putting various questions respecting their equipment, its object, and the books which they were distributing. When he had drawn from them, however, all the information he wished, he resumed his offensive manner. Yet they found means to walk about

the city; but their inquiries respecting the state of trade were greatly impeded by the multitudes who constantly followed, and filled every shop into which they entered, so that the inmates had scarcely time to answer a single question.

Mr Lindsay, on returning to the ship, found a circle of junks and war-boats formed round her, and the system of punishing all who held the slightest communication with him again in active operation. Having experienced the benefit of a determined conduct, he intimated to Chin, the vice-admiral, that either the natives must be allowed free access to his vessel, or in that very tide he would move it into the upper part of the river, called the port, and take his station opposite his office at Min-gan, there to await the answer of the viceroy. The admiral, dreading the reproach which the fulfilment of this threat would cast upon him, yet conscious of his inability to prevent it, saw no alternative but to consent. The deck was soon thronged with people, and Yang, a mandarin, came on board and exhorted his countrymen to preserve order,—an advice which did not seem much wanted. Another incident increased their respect, or at least fear, for the English. The admiral's junk having anchored too close to them, and kept her place in spite of repeated warnings, the rising tide caused her to run foul of their vessel, occasioning considerable damage to both. In order to extricate them, the boat was sent with a small party to cut the junk's cable. Four men leapt on board, with only two short axes in their hands; whereupon the whole crew, forty or fifty in number, rushed, some below, others over the bows,

and some headlong into the water. There remained on deck only the admiral, who, by the most humble gestures, deprecated the violence supposed to be intended. The men quietly severed the rope, according to orders, and departed; and this panic, however groundless, had the agreeable effect of deterring any war-junks from again anchoring nearer than half a mile.

Soon after an edict arrived from the tsong-tou, refusing, though in mild terms, the requested permission to trade, and exhorting the officers, now that wind and weather were favourable, to proceed immediately on their voyage. A considerable discussion arose respecting the application to them of the monosyllable E, which was complained of as bearing the import of barbarian. This was denied by the natives; and on another occasion a paper was presented, arguing that "the most ancient sages of the central flowery nation" had merely employed it to designate foreigners in the *east*,—as *man* signified those in the south, *jung* in the west, and *teih* in the north,—and that the term was disrespectful only in their own imagination. Perhaps they might have been satisfied with this disavowal; however, they drew up a reply, in which they quoted, from a statistical work published by authority, the following passage:—"The E and the teih cannot be governed by the same rules of government as those of the central nation. They are like the brute creation (like birds and beasts); if liberal rules of government were applied to them, it would infallibly give rise to rebellious confusion. The ancient kings knew this well, and therefore ruled them without laws. This is decidedly the most judicious mode

of governing them." By this representation they procured for the future the omission of the offensive epithet.

Notwithstanding this edict, the permission to have intercourse with the people was not ostensibly withdrawn. Their boats were not stopped, nor were they subjected to any punishment. Few, however, now appeared; supplies were no longer furnished, and information was obtained, that, along the shore and in all the villages, strict watch was kept, and every means of intimidation employed to prevent any one from embarking articles for the use of the foreigners. This was confirmed by two menacing proclamations, which the English themselves saw during their excursions on land. Mr Lindsay, following the resolute course which he had formerly adopted, and listening to the advice of several Chinese themselves, held the agreement as violated; and on the 3d May moved up into the port, anchoring opposite the custom-house. This measure produced the desired result. Their friend Yang, whom they had not seen for some days, came out, and referring to their former statement, that they would be satisfied with a sale to the amount of 10,000 dollars, inquired whether, upon his bringing customers to this extent, they would immediately quit the port. The supercargo made no hesitation in giving a promise to that effect; upon which a party of merchants were brought, who stated that they were in the habit of dealing at Canton, and really showed themselves well acquainted with its trade. They objected to the prices asked; but, after some abatement, took the value of above 6000 dollars in camlets, broad cloth, and calicoes. In endeavouring to make up a

cargo of tea, Mr Lindsay seems to have been, for the first time, struck with his own incapacity of judging as to the quality of that article. He was therefore, though supplied with an ample choice, obliged to confine himself to a few descriptions offered at moderate prices; in several of which, however, he found that he was deceived.

A few days before their departure, the English received the unpleasant intelligence of the degradation of Chin, vice-admiral at Min-gan, and two other naval officers, on the charge of having allowed the Amherst to enter the port; the government thus cruelly throwing upon them the blame of its own inefficiency. One of these unfortunate persons wrote a very sensible and friendly letter, where, alluding to his disaster, he added,—"This, however, is because my destiny fated it to be so. How dare I harbour resentment! My elder brother did not know that, by coming here in your precious ship, you would implicate our honour. I feel neither anger nor resentment towards you my elder brother." He earnestly pressed, however, for an immediate departure, as relieving him from a heavy additional load of guilt. Mr Lindsay wrote a kind reply, with an invitation to visit the ship, which was accepted. In complaining of the unjust conduct of his government, this officer used very remarkable expressions. "Look," said he, "on our paltry vessels, and compare them with yours,—how can we control you?" He showed himself in other respects superior to the prejudices of his countrymen. On looking at the engravings in Cuvier's Natural History, he pointed them out to his companion, saying,—"Where have we any thing like

this?" The telescopes, pistols, and other objects, excited equal admiration. All presents were refused, except of the most trifling nature.

The English found themselves not less acceptable to the natives of this district than they were to those round Amoy. Mr Gutzlaff gained the same popularity by his conversation and medical practice, which drew patients from the distance of fifty miles, so that he often treated a hundred cases in a day. He learned that there were numerous professing Christians in this district, and was introduced to several, who proved Roman Catholics, and were in general very unenlightened. They had, however, begun last year to print the "holy book," but warned him not to allow so precious a work to be seen by any of the blinded heathen. However foreign this was to his own views, he was pleased to see that they were opening for themselves the fountains of instruction. Several of his religious tracts were transmitted to Pe-king for the inspection of the court; and, though this might not be done with the most friendly intention, he cherished a faint hope that, through the blessing of Heaven, some good effect might be produced upon a government which swayed the destiny of so large a portion of the human race.

They now quitted the river of Fou-tcheou-fou, and made direct for Ning-po, which they reached with some difficulty by the aid of imperfect charts. The ship was left twenty miles from the entrance of the Ta-hae, where they arrived in a boat. It was found half a mile wide, with six or seven fathoms water, affording both passage and anchorage for ships of any size; and the coast being below the level of high-water-mark, was protected for six miles

by a magnificent embankment erected by Kang-hi, though now a good deal decayed. A number of large junks were lying off Chin-hae, a city of the second class, at the mouth of the river; but the party pushed directly up to Ning-po, twelve or fourteen miles higher. Several inferior mandarins, who came off in boats, attempted by entreaties and threats to induce them to stop; boys were even instigated at one place to pelt them with stones; but being warned that this outrage would be represented to the authorities, they desisted. Mr Lindsay soon reached the town in question; and on landing inquired for the office of the che-fou, to which he was conducted amidst an immense crowd. He passed through a broad street, lined with shops even superior to those of Canton, and containing a lavish display of European as well as of Chinese manufactures. At length he and his attendants were ushered into the presence of an inferior magistrate, called the che-hien, where the sudden appearance of a party of strangers excited an amazement still greater than a similar event had caused at Fou-tcheou-fou. This personage, on recovering from his surprise, readily agreed to introduce them to the che-fou; which he did in a hall of Confucius, capable of containing 2000 persons. This dignitary soon entered with a large and imposing train; and any awe they might have felt was soon dispelled by his smiling aspect and prepossessing manners. The affair, he said, merited consideration till to-morrow; meantime they should be accommodated and supplied with every thing; and he added several times in a jocular tone, —"Do not you think this is right?" The strangers expressed entire satisfaction, and, after answering

several questions, were conducted to commodious lodgings, where their only annoyance arose from the concourse of curious visiters, who continued near them till midnight.

Next morning they were waited upon by the che-hien and other mandarins, who addressed them in the most polite and respectful manner, stating that the che-fou could decide nothing till the arrival of the te-tuh, who was at some distance, but that he and other officers would start in the afternoon for Chin-hae, and thence visit the ship. One of the mandarins, Ma-ta-laon-yay, professed himself most decidedly their friend, and conversed long in a manner so agreeable and intelligent, that they were quite fascinated with him. He proved to be a Mohammedan from the country of Cashgar, where he had opportunities of hearing of the British power in India, and showed more general information than is usual among the Chinese. He readily allowed them to visit several of the shops; and they were uniformly hailed with the strongest expressions of good-will, and of satisfaction at the prospects of renewed trade. When they embarked, the mandarins took a most respectful leave, continuing to bow to them as long as they remained in sight. On returning to the ship, Mr Lindsay moved it up to a convenient anchorage, within a mile of Chin-hae,—a step which was blamed by Ma, as having been taken without permission from the te-tuh; but several arguments were stated in defence of the measure, which was finally acquiesced in. Meantime the che-fou, the te-tuh, and other great lords and che-hiens, having arrived at Chin-hae, the 30th May was fixed for an audience. Clouds, however,

began to gather over these flattering prospects. The extreme politeness of Ma seemed rather to bespeak the courtier than the friend. Sun-say-on-gay, a naval chief, the most honest man they had yet met with, warned Mr Gutzlaff that the che-fou, amid all his politeness, was only anxious to get them away; that he was afraid Ma would be too clever for them; and that they would have to deal with many rogues, especially among the literary mandarins.

At Ma's next visit, he said that trade could not be publicly carried on without imperial authority, but their object might be effected by some private arrangement, and showed himself not unwilling to co-operate. Previous to the grand audience, they had an interview with the che-hiens of Chin-hae and of Ting-hai (in Tchu-san), who had come to attend it. The latter was a proud, supercilious personage, decidedly hostile to them as foreigners. They were now shown an official notice, which had come from Fo-kien, where the barbarian ship was described in the most opprobrious terms, as creeping about like a rat (an expression three times repeated); and the people were exhorted to guard against the said ship, and, wherever she appeared, instantly to drive her away, and not allow her to stop a single moment. Mr Lindsay expressed much indignation; and Ma, in whose absence the disclosure had taken place, loudly blamed the production of a document, with which the local authorities had no concern. Through his exertions, it is added, harmony was for the present restored.

On the following day the promised interview took place. The party, being ushered through a double

file of troops into a tent, found an illustrious triumvirate,—the te-tuh, the tsung-ping-kwan, and the taou-tae. The two first cordially returned their salutation, but "the taou-tae looked black as thunder." On every occasion they usually encountered some such decided opponent. A discussion arose respecting the privilege of sitting, which we think need not have been so earnestly contended for, as it appears to have been clearly contrary to Chinese usage. During the conference, the te-tuh showed generally a friendly disposition; but whenever he was about to say or consent to any thing agreeable, hostile sentiments were whispered into his ear by the taou-tae. Our countrymen were made acquainted with an extremely unfavourable report forwarded to the emperor respecting them by the Tsong-tou of Fo-kien. It strongly condemned their having entered, and obstinately remaining in the port, though strictly prohibited. Two of the barbarians, it was said, understood a little of the Han language, and could write it coarsely; and they had distributed some books among the fishermen. They had been driven away, without being allowed to trade, and the whole affair had been referred to imperial decision. The supercargo's request to have a copy of this document was defeated by the influence of his adversary. He then submitted his own petition for liberty to sell, but could with great difficulty obtain for it a reading; which task, through want of scholarship in the te-tuh, devolved on the taou-tae, who, in performing it, looked all the time "as black as night." The general result was, that unless they could procure an express license from the emperor, no business could be allowed in any port except Canton. The petition

was returned, but Mr Lindsay refused to accept it; and when a mandarin followed and slipped it under the bow of the boat, he leaped on shore, ran back, threw it upon the table, and, on its being a second time sent back, refused to receive it,—a step of which we confess ourselves unable to discover the advantage.

At Ma's next visit that courtly person showed a sensible abatement in his professions of zeal to serve them. They could not, indeed, reasonably expect that he should expose himself to martyrdom in their cause, which was wearing so unfavourable an aspect. But there seems reason to suspect, that his great display of cordiality was from the first assumed, chiefly to draw out of them the real motive of their expedition; for, as he acknowledged in a subsequent interview, he never could bring himself to believe that they had not some object beyond trade. "We are afraid of you," says he; "you are too clever for us. For instance, no sooner does a ship of yours arrive, than out go your boats in all directions; you sound, you make charts, and in a week know the whole place as well as we do." Even when shown the large store of goods in the hold, he pretended conviction, but evidently did not feel it. However, under his arrangements some merchants came out, and, though much disappointed at the absence of opium, selected an assortment of broad cloth, camlets, and calicoes. They inquired also for long ells, but there were none. The prices were settled after some discussion, and the English agreed to take raw silk in exchange. Every thing was arranged except the delivery of the goods; but unexpected obstacles arose.

Mr Lindsay, being anxious to examine the anchorage in a higher part of the river, sailed up in the long-boat without encountering any resistance, though

there was a large assemblage of war-junks drawn up apparently to prevent his passage. But on his return he was surrounded by about fifteen boats, and one ran directly on the beam of his, while the hooks of others were fastened to its sides, and several inferior mandarins pushed their way into his bark. Being destitute of arms, and apprehending an intention to make himself and party prisoners, he caused the crew to commence an assault with sticks and tillers, with which the assailants were beaten off, and two officers with gold buttons thrown into the water. The leaders among the Chinese now called to their countrymen to desist, and made apologies; though the matter was afterwards the subject of an angry discussion, and Mr Gutzlaff seems to doubt the necessity of force being employed.

It does not exactly appear whether this incident had any effect in producing a decree issued on the 7th June by the taou-tae, which, though expressed in a tolerably respectful manner, and containing no offensive epithets, absolutely refused all permission to trade at Ning-po. Lo, a mandarin who brought this decree, strongly urged obedience to it; and when the supercargo intimated his intention not to move till he had completed the commercial transactions in which he had been allowed to engage, the envoy showed the deepest distress. He threw himself on his knees, offering to perform the ceremony of ko-tou, and even to give a sum of money, on condition of immediate departure; but both were positively rejected. On reflection, however, it was thought advisable to reply to the taou-tae, thanking him for the polite terms of his decree, and acquiescing in its tenor. Hopes were still entertained, that the commercial engagements al-

ready formed would be quietly completed; but several days elapsed, and neither Ma nor the merchants appeared. Mr Lindsay, anxious not to go without disposing of some part of his cargo, determined to offer him a commission of five per cent., provided he still would contrive to carry through the transaction. That officer, however, avoided seeing them, unless at a public audience, in the presence of other mandarins, when, evidently actuated by a dread of being considered their friend, he stated, in a polite but decisive manner, the utter impossibility of their being allowed to trade. He urged the acceptance of gratuitous supplies, and even of a sum of money; but both were rejected as degrading. At length, on the understanding that the British were immediately to quit the port, an arrangement was made for their procuring by purchase the necessaries they required. Presents, with complimentary messages, were received from the different heads of departments; but Ma sent an intimation that he had incurred so much suspicion on their account that he durst not come to bid them farewell.

The precautions to prevent the natives from coming on board, or holding communication with the foreigners, were here so strict that very little satisfactory intercourse was enjoyed. There was enough, however, to show that the people were animated by the same friendly disposition, and the same readiness to receive the instructions which Mr Gutzlaff was so anxious to communicate, as their southern countrymen. This was still more evident when they touched at Kin-tang, a fertile island near the mouth of the river, beautifully diversified with hills and valleys, and where the inhabitants seemed to enjoy greater comfort and independence than on the continent.

The expedition now stood direct for a port still larger and more flourishing than any yet visited, though its name had hitherto been scarcely, if at all, heard in Europe. This was Shang-hai, near the mouth of the river Woo-sung, by which it communicates with Sou-tcheou-fou, and by the Great Canal with the Yang-tse-kiang, of which mighty river, and the fruitful regions which it waters, this appears to be the chief emporium. They made their way with difficulty, guided by very imperfect charts, and chiefly by following in the wake of two Chinese junks. On the morning of the 21st June they reached the estuary, the entrance of which was defended by two forts, one in better condition than usual; but a favouring tide soon carried them beyond reach of the guns. The channel was about a quarter of a mile wide, and the country on its banks a dead flat, very fertile, intersected by hedges and ditches, and greatly resembling Holland. They pushed on, regardless of every attempt to arrest them, and about half-past four reached the city, where the numerous junks of every size and shape, which the depth of the water enabled to approach and unload at the spacious wharfs and warehouses, showed that rumour had not exaggerated its importance. Mr Lindsay followed his usual plan, immediately to land, inquire the way, and proceed rapidly to the residence of the chief magistrate. The aspect of this large town did not please quite so much as that of Ning-po. It is described as having "houses generally very low, streets narrow, shops numerous, some magnificent temples, and excessive bustle." On reaching the office of the taou-tae, they found the lictors hastily endeavouring to shut the door against them; but, by briskly pushing back

these officials, they made their way into the outer court. The inner doors were carefully barred; but two of the party, applying their shoulders, drove them off their hinges, and caused them to fall down with a loud clatter. They were better received than could have been expected after this very unceremonious entry, and were invited to take tea and pipes till the che-hien, in the absence of the taou-tae, should come to speak to them. That officer soon arrived, but gave them the worst reception they had ever experienced. He upbraided their temerity in coming to Shang-hai without permission, and declared they could not possibly trade, but must return immediately to Canton. They were soon after summoned to an audience of the taoutae, who was said to have just returned from the port of Woo-sung at the mouth of the river, whither he had gone to meet them. About half an hour was spent in urging their claim to sit, which was rejected, but with the compromise, that the taoutae himself should stand during the interview. In this attitude he addressed them in the same boisterous and angry tone, and with the same insulting expressions already used by the che-hien. Mr Lindsay answered in a tone equally haughty. Attempts were made to force back upon him the petition which he had presented, but it was refused; and after being five or six times bandied backward and forward, the Chinese were obliged to retain it. A proposition was made, the effect of which would have been to detain them all as prisoners; but this was repelled in the most determined manner, and never repeated. The inferior mandarins, though neither very agreeable nor intelligent persons, behaved with a good deal of civility, and even showed

pleasure in the conversation of their visiters, for whom, moreover, a good supper was provided.

Next morning the supercargo and his friends walked out; but the first object which met their eye was an edict, posted some days before on the walls of the temple where they lodged, warning the people that a barbarian ship was hovering upon the coast, directing that the instant she appeared any where she should be expelled, and not allowed to loiter for a single moment. It was added, that all who should hold any communication with her would be seized, tried, and punished. In the face of this prohibition the party rambled through the city, and entered a number of shops, where they received the usual hearty welcome, and their pamphlets, particularly that on England, were in the greatest request. In many of these shops British woollens were sold at high prices, under the name of *Kung-tse* (Company), and this title was considered so creditable, that in another place it was assumed by a dealer who did not really possess any of our manufactures. On waiting again upon the che-hien, they found a most favourable change in his deportment, which they ascribed to their own firm and determined behaviour. Instead of refusing seats, he now entreated them to accept the most honourable, and talked of the satisfaction he should feel if he could cultivate their friendship, and even commercial intercourse. On returning to the ship, however, Mr Lindsay found military preparations in progress, which were intended to be of the most formidable description, and yet proved of such a nature, as if the sole object of the Chinese had been to render themselves ridiculous. Six large guns were laid down on mud-banks upon each side of

the river, but without trucks or carriages. Heaps of earth were moulded into the shape of tents, and whitewashed to give them the semblance of an extensive encampment,—the authorities not being aware that the persons whom they meant to intimidate could with their glasses clearly distinguish all that was going forward. Fifteen war-junks had been assembled, each of about eighty tons burden, and with one gun mounted on a sort of table in the centre. In defiance of these mighty preparations, the supercargo announced his intention of waiting till an answer should be received from the tsong-tou at Nan-king. He expected, during the interval, to find an opportunity of disposing of his cargo, and also that his commercial requests, as well as his complaints respecting the treatment of the English at Canton, would have a better chance of being transmitted to the imperial court. On the other hand, the mandarins appeared to take very little notice of him, and merely prevented his being visited by the people, or carrying on any trade; hoping that when he should see the impossibility of effecting his object, he would be induced to depart. They succeeded by rigorous edicts in deterring any natives from visiting the ship; but he and Mr Gutzlaff made daily excursions on shore, without any other inconvenience than that of having mandarins to accompany them under pretext of watching over their safety. The land was luxuriantly fertile, every where dotted with villages, and the peasantry were busily employed in gathering their wheat-harvest, to be succeeded by one of rice. They lived chiefly on vermicelli, and cakes made of the former grain, and appeared healthy and well-fed. The fine yellow cotton used for nankeen-cloth

was also cultivated, every farmer having an apparatus to manufacture part of it for his own use, while he sold the surplus. The travellers met the usual kind reception, which was still more conspicuous in an excursion they made to Tsung-ming, a very fruitful island, formed, probably since the time of Marco Polo, from the alluvial deposites brought down by the great stream of the Yang-tse-kiang. The population were not, as on the continent, assembled in villages, but scattered in hamlets and detached dwellings. Though astonished at the first view of the strangers, they soon accosted them with the most unaffected kindness; and the books were received and read in circles with the most enthusiastic delight. At their departure a crowd of 600 vied with each other in offering presents of fish and vegetables, and one boy, who had nothing else, took a carved bamboo-comb with which his hair was fastened, and begged Mr Gutzlaff to accept it.

Meantime affairs on shipboard remained in an uncomfortable and unsatisfactory state. No less than five mandarins of high rank were assembled at Woo-sung, evidently on account of this visit; yet none of these held the least communication with the officers. Several merchants, with whom these last procured an interview, declared their readiness to treat on the terms offered; but too strict a watch was kept to admit of any such transaction. The taou-tae transmitted at one time an insulting and imperious edict to "the man of the barbarian ship;" but, on receiving an indignant reply, he soon after sent an apology, with a request to have the document returned; which, however, was refused. The only persons who came near them were two illiterate mandarins, with a clerk of the taou-tae, who

acted as interpreter; and these employed the most earnest entreaties to induce them to move out of the river, urging the disastrous consequences to themselves. They even, on one occasion, fell on their knees and proffered the ko-tou. This ridiculous homage was of course rejected; but it was very perplexing at the same time to find the interpreter, who probably had been gained over by the merchants, advising a directly opposite course, and assuring them that, if they stood firm, they would ultimately gain their object, and be allowed to trade. Amid these difficulties Mr Lindsay determined to proceed up to Shang-hai, and seek an interview with the che-hien. That officer received him with extreme politeness and a profusion of compliments, declaring that the proposed trade would be most acceptable to himself and the other mandarins; but that he must be sensible of its impossibility while prohibited by the laws of the empire. The other complained that this had not been sooner and more candidly stated by the official persons assembled at Woo-sung. We confess we do not exactly see that the Chinese authorities could be charged with vacillation here, having most frankly expressed, on all occasions, their extreme desire to be rid of their visiters. However, as soon as the che-hien learned that such a declaration would induce them to take their departure, he resolved that it should not be long wanting. He took leave of them with great courtesy, agreeing, though reluctantly, to shut his eyes while they went through several shops and selected specimens of the beautiful silks and crapes manufactured at Sou-tcheou-fou.

Next morning an invitation was received from

the great official conclave at Woo-sung, to come on shore at noon and meet Paou-ta-zhin, a newly-arrived mandarin of rank, deputed by the fou-yuen, or principal governor at Sou-tcheou-fou. They complied, and were received in a manner perfectly polite and respectful, and instead of having a controversy to maintain about being seated, were invited at once to sit in the most honourable place. Paou-ta-zhin listened patiently to their complaints and requests, and declared the pleasure with which he would consent to a trade; but added, that it was utterly impossible without the sanction of the emperor. The only plan was to transmit to him a *wan-shoo*, soliciting the desired permission, the procuring of which would delight them all; in the mean time, they had not power to permit any traffic, and the strangers therefore must return and dispose of their cargo at Canton. Mr Lindsay at length agreed, that if these sentiments were embodied in a respectful official document, and an opportunity given to him to procure the necessary supplies, he would take his departure. That very afternoon the paper arrived, in which the obnoxious *E* was omitted; a friendly disposition was professed; but the impossibility of transacting business was declared in the most peremptory manner; and they were advised, with a view to their own interest, to return immediately to the privileged port from which they had sailed. This was not quite what had been wished or expected; however, on its having the taou-tae's seal attached to it, which had been at first withheld, the supercargo thought it prudent to acquiesce. Several disputes arose as to the mode in which the supplies were to be furnished; but the Chinese soon yielded every

point which was declared indispensable to the departure of the English. On the 8th July, accordingly, they put to sea, and on the 5th of September returned to Macao, by a circuitous route, having visited the coasts of Corea and of the Loochoo Islands, to which our present subject does not lead us to follow them.

Soon after the arrival of the Amherst at Macao, another experimental voyage was undertaken by the Sylph, a small, well-armed, fast-sailing vessel, with a view to reach the northern emporium of Tien-sing and the shores of Mantchoo Tartary. Mr Gutzlaff, to whom we are indebted for our information respecting this enterprise, was induced by the same generous motives as before to share its hardships and perils.*

The Sylph sailed on the 20th October 1832; but scarcely had she left the roads of Macao, when she encountered one of those tremendous gales, accompanied with torrents of rain, to which the Chinese seas are subject. One mighty wave dashing across the deck, carried overboard a Lascar, whose dying cries were heard amid the darkness and roar of the tempest, without its being possible to render him any assistance. When the storm abated, they prosecuted their voyage along the rocky coast of Canton, landing at several points, and communicating with the natives, some of whom recognised Mr Gutzlaff as an old acquaintance. He liberally distributed books, having brought a stock three times as large as on his former trip, and they were received with the utmost thankfulness. In passing along the shores of Fo-kien, the crew only gazed from a distance on its large maritime villages and

* Gutzlaff's Journal, p. 413, &c.

cities. Near its northern point they were obliged to put into Lae-ao Bay, which they found an excellent harbour, almost completely landlocked. The inhabitants looked strange and timid; and the first to whom a book was tendered appeared a good deal surprised; but, when he began to read to the others, all were delighted, and numerous applications were made for a similar gift. Even when the captain was beckoning them away previous to departure, they called out,—"We must have these good books, and will not move without them." The vessel having reached the frontier of Tche-kiang, put into the port of Pih-kwan, which is recommended as at once spacious and commodious. Here were several junks on their way to Shang-hai, the crews of which at first declined the offer of tracts, as having nothing to give in exchange; but being told they were a gift, thankfully accepted them. The Sylph now found herself in the midst of the innumerable vessels which ply along the fine shores of Tche-kiang and Kiang-nan. She proceeded direct, however, for her destination, and, after passing the eastern promontory of Shan-tung, reached the waters of Mantchoo Tartary.

This coast, composing the seaboard of the province of Leao-tong, was formerly very rude, but has been much improved by Chinese emigrants, chiefly from the neighbouring province of Shan-tung. They conduct all the branches of industry, while the Tartars live in proud indolence, supported chiefly by government-offices. The climate is severe, and the soil various, but in many places fertile. The finer species of grain are not raised; though pulse, and especially pease, abound, together with large herds of cattle and goats. The people dwell in mean

hovels with two apartments, one occupied by the family, but nearly filled by the oven, while the other is tenanted by the pigs, goats, and asses. They, however, have plenty of food, and are protected against the rigour of the climate by abundance of skins and cloth. The blasts from the frozen regions of Kamtschatka were felt so intensely by the seamen accustomed to a tropical sky, that one of the Lascars died of cold, and some of the others had nearly shared the same fate. The principal ports, which are those of Kae-tcheou and Kin-tcheou, are not remarkable for their convenience. The former is spacious and deep, but does not afford anchorage so close to the shore as to shelter vessels from the northerly gales. The town itself is situate about ten miles in the interior, surrounded by a high wall, and populous, with extensive trade; but the houses are low and ill built. Kin-tcheou, nearer the Great Wall, about fifteen leagues from Moukden (Tchin-yang), the capital of Mantchooria, is not a large nor handsome place, while its harbour is shallow and exposed to the south. All this coast is very ill laid down in the charts, being studded with many islands, which are not inserted. Sand-banks also occur, on one of which the Sylph was nearly wrecked. Mr Gutzlaff does not enter into any particulars respecting the trade; but he mentions no obstacle either to it or to a ready intercourse with the natives. He was gratified to find them intelligent, frank, and candid; and the country in all respects appeared to open a promising field for missionary exertion.

No attempt appears to have been made, according to the announced intention, to reach Tien-sing; but they steered direct from Tartary southwards to Shang-hai. In the channel leading to the river

they were assailed by a very fierce tempest, at the termination of which they saw near them a Chinese vessel in the utmost distress. Having lost her masts and anchors, she was drifting like a log upon the ocean. They had never received any aid themselves on such occasions, and several passing ships showed little or no regard to the sufferings of their countrymen; the English nevertheless judged this a seasonable opportunity to exemplify the merciful spirit of their religion. They manned a boat, and, amid waves which threatened to overwhelm them, made their way to the vessel, when the crew, who were crying aloud for help, eagerly accepted the proffered aid; but the first object handed out, as the most precious which the vessel contained, was the image of Ma-tsoo-po, Queen of Heaven. Her celestial majesty was indignantly plunged into the waves; but the people, in successive parties, were carried safely on board the Sylph.

They now proceeded up the river Woo-sung towards the grand emporium of Shang-hai, opposite to which they found a thousand junks moored; and being recommended by the generous service they had just rendered, were kindly received by Kwang, the admiral. The most severe edicts, it is true, were issued against their trading, and the inhabitants were exhorted to avoid all intercourse with the barbarians; yet few serious obstacles were opposed to either object. An imperial order* arrived, enjoining them to be treated with compassion, but not to be supplied with rice or water. This was obeyed *literally;* but live stock, flour, and other

* Gutzlaff's Journal, p. 428. A mistake, we suspect, as there could not be time to communicate with Pe-king; perhaps from the viceroy.

provisions, were furnished in abundance. Mr Gutzlaff had great satisfaction in communicating with the natives, and wherever he appeared crowds gathered round him, entreating for a supply of books.

Having remained here from the 25th December 1832 to the 5th January 1833, they sailed for Shapoo, another grand emporium, hitherto almost unknown in Europe, situated on the river which leads up to Hang-tcheou-fou. It is about five miles in circumference, surrounded by a country the most beautiful and picturesque that perhaps exists in the empire, and called the Chinese Arcadia. As far as the eye can range, all appears as one village, interspersed with towering pagodas, romantic mausoleums, and numerous temples. The people seemed to partake this superior character; they were full of intelligent inquiry; and nowhere had the English been treated with such frankness and kindness. On first landing, indeed, they encountered a military force, under a Tartar general, provided with matchlocks and burning matches; "but being accustomed to the fire of Chinese batteries, which seldom do hurt, and knowing that their matchlocks cannot hit, we passed the line of their defence in peace. The soldiers retreated, and, the crowds of people in the rear being very dense, a great part of the camp was overrun and pressed down by them, so that the tents fell to the ground." From this time all annoyance ceased; and in an interview with a very sensible person, deputed by the Governor of Hang-tcheou-fou, a regular understanding was established. During the twelve days that the Sylph remained, the cordiality and gayety of the natives, and the avidity with which they sought for the treasures in possession of the missionary,

exceeded what had been witnessed in any other part of China. On their passage back to Canton they touched at Poo-too, one of the Tchu-san Islands, entirely dedicated to the worship of Boodh, which is there celebrated in all its pomp. This spot, twelve miles square, contains about 2000 devotees, with numerous temples, crowded with deformed and colossal images. Yet the priests, as eagerly as the people, sought the Christian's books, though seemingly quite unconscious of what they were; since, on receiving them, they exclaimed, "Praise be to Budha!" In one place he was literally plundered of his spiritual store, and obliged to promise that he would speedily return with a larger supply. After a voyage of six months and nine days they reached Lintin, near Macao, on the 29th April.

It may be proper here to introduce a few observations as to the light thrown by these voyages upon the important question, whether an extensive trade can be carried on with the eastern ports of China, and in what manner it may be rendered most successful. We think it evident that every expectation of obtaining for it the public consent of the authorities is completely chimerical. The uniform rejection of such a proposal by the supreme government does not rest, as Mr Gutzlaff supposes, on the capricious will of a single individual. It centres in the great pous, or boards, resident in the capital, who, from causes already explained, have always shown a relentless hostility to every innovation. While their sanction is withheld, the provincial governors and mandarins can never grant any open permission to trade. He has even arraigned their conduct as immoral and jesuitical, in enforcing the prohibitory laws while they would have wished them rescinded. This,

however, is a necessity to which executive and subordinate officers of the freest countries are equally subject. They can never be allowed, in the exercise of private judgment, to disobey the laws of their country and the orders of their superiors; if they were, the whole political fabric would be unhinged. They are placed, indeed, in a most distressing situation when these laws are violated in a manner which they cannot prevent, being made responsible by an arbitrary government for every disorder which happens within their jurisdiction.

As the consent of the Chinese rulers cannot be expected, so we doubt much if any permanent advantage can be gained by violence or intimidation. The weakness of the military and naval force on their coast is indeed so extreme, that almost any particular point might be carried. But were such aggressions continued, it can scarcely be doubted that a government possessed of intelligence and such vast resources would in time organize the means of repelling any force that could be mustered by private traders. Tartar troops could be brought forward, with whom Europeans have never yet come into contact, and who form, as already observed, the only force which deserves the name of a standing army. At all events, supposing a formal consent to be extorted, the governors possess the means, by threats and severe penalties, to deter the people from acting upon it, and thus to render it wholly useless to Europeans. In the same view, the practice of forcing an entrance into the great cities, and into public audiences of the viceroys and governors, seems a sure way of defeating the object.

Instead of these violent demonstrations, the only probable means of success appears to be to carry on

trade in an unobtrusive manner, anchoring near the mouths of the rivers on which the great ports are situated, or off the adjacent islands. Some interval might elapse before a regular communication could in this way be opened; but the example of Lintin seems to leave no doubt that it might arrive at a vast magnitude, and ultimately be carried to almost any extent. Opium might serve to clear the way; but cotton, which forms the clothing of the inferior ranks, if afforded cheaper, would doubtless find ready purchasers. Woollens are entirely adapted to the northern provinces, and, as formerly observed, have been disused only because the system of Chinese husbandry does not admit the rearing of sheep. Contraband trade is attended with many evils, and not to be recommended without much reluctance; but the present case is so extreme, and the tyranny so severe, by which this vast portion of the human race are prevented from exchanging the productions of their industry for those of other countries, that it seems impossible to criticise severely any arrangements by which, in a quiet manner, these oppressive regulations might be rendered nugatory.

This account of British intercourse with the Celestial Empire must close with a new era, which has been ushered in by some rather painful events. By the act of Parliament passed in 1833, the commerce with China, and with every part of the Eastern World, was thrown open to all classes of his majesty's subjects; the Company not only losing the exclusive possession of it, but being, in their corporate capacity at least, no longer permitted to trade at all. As their factory at Canton was purely commercial, they necessarily dropt all connexion with that place; and the task of protecting the more ex-

tensive traffic which was expected to arise devolved of course on the general government. They accordingly resolved to place it under a special superintendent, and for that purpose appointed Lord Napier, who held the rank of captain in his majesty's navy. His powers were understood to extend to the adjustment of all disputed questions among the merchants themselves, and also to the regulation of the negotiations with the provincial authorities. But this last arrangement, though plausible, had not been formed with a sufficient consideration of the character of the Chinese people. The intercourse had hitherto been managed, under authority of the Company, by a tae-pan, or supercargo, all whose communications were with the Hong-merchants; the imperial officers holding it beneath their dignity to interfere in mercantile affairs. The arrival at Canton of a nobleman, demanding as a right to treat with the deputies of the emperor, was esteemed both an outrage on the national dignity, and a violation of its strictest regulations. Indeed, we may observe, that were a mandarin to settle at Liverpool or Bristol, and to claim the privilege of exercising a certain jurisdiction, and of holding a constant communication with the local authorities, his pretensions would be regarded as decidedly overstepping even our ideas of propriety.

These considerations had escaped the attention of the government at home, and instructions appear to have been given that Lord Napier should proceed at once to take up his residence at Canton. His lordship, on the 14th July 1834, arrived in the Andromache at Macao, when Mr Davis and Sir G. Robinson were appointed second and third superintendents, Mr Astell secretary, and Dr Morrison Chinese se-

cretary. He then set sail, and on the 25th arrived at Canton.

All these movements had been closely watched by the native government. A report was made, that an English vessel of war, having on board a barbarian *eye* (officer of rank), had anchored at Cabreta Point, near Macao. Hereupon Loo, governor of Canton, having understood that the English Company was dissolved, and judging that this new officer was to supply the place of their tae-pan, or supercargo, issued an order that the Hong-merchants should proceed to Macao, and ascertain what were the circumstances under which the trade was now to be conducted, and the regulations that would thence become necessary. Notice was given at the same time, that until a full report were made to the governor, and his consent obtained, the superintendent, though he might reside at Macao, was by no means to present himself at Canton.

In pursuance of this order, Hou-qua and Mou-qua, deputed by the Hong, proceeded to Macao; but before they could reach that place Lord Napier had set out; and, notwithstanding all their efforts to overtake him, he arrived at Canton before them. Next day a letter from him to the viceroy was presented at the city-gates, but was rejected on account of its not being in the form of a petition. The displeasure of the government was immediately manifested by the disappearance of all the native servants in the employ of the British.

A strong sensation was now created in the city, and a report was made to the hoppo, that, on the 18th of the present moon, about midnight, "a barbarian ship's boat had arrived at Canton, bringing four English devils," who took up their abode in

the factory. This being connected with the appearance of a British man-of-war in the outer seas, was represented as a clandestine stealing into Canton. The governor issued an order, declaring the impossibility that, in conformity to the laws of China, this new eye or officer could continue to reside in that city:—"Even England has its laws; how much more the Celestial Empire! How flaming bright are its great laws and ordinances;—more terrible than the awful thunderbolt! Under this whole bright heaven, none dares to disobey them. Under its shelter are the four seas. Subject to its soothing care are the ten thousand kingdoms." Actuated, however, by feelings of clemency, and allowing for the ignorance of national laws and customs incident to a stranger, he enacts that, if the latter, after having despatched the business on which he came, shall immediately return to Macao, and promise never to resort to Canton without special permission, the past offence will be overlooked. The merchants were enjoined to instruct him of this; and they were reminded that an officer, sent in this high situation from so great a distance, must be a man of sense, disposed to act in accordance with reason; and hence, that his neglect to do so could only arise from their bad management, for which they would be proceeded against with the utmost rigour. Two further orders speedily followed, intimating that the Hong must take means to induce or compel the British to obey this command, and that, in case of failure, they would be held themselves responsible. The native dealers, placed in this perplexing situation, used every possible means of influencing Lord Napier, who, however, having been refused access to the persons in

power, declined any communication whatever with the Hong. They then addressed the British merchants, inviting them to a conference. His lordship, however, called the latter to a meeting, and stated that, having attained his present station, and being determined not to leave it unless at the point of the bayonet, he called upon them, by refusing the proposed interview, to support the honour of the king's commission and the dignity of his superintendent. The merchants unanimously concurred in this decision, and signed a letter to that effect. The Hong, thus frustrated in every attempt at accommodation, resolved to disarm the threats of their government, by being the first to propose the entire stoppage of the trade. The English, having been apprized of this intention, were again called together by Lord Napier, from whose address it appears that considerable dissensions had now arisen among them. He urged, however, an adherence to the same system, engaging to support it by ordering up the ships of war, and even anchoring them under the walls of the town. He suggested, however, that they should form among themselves a chamber of commerce, through whom communication might be held with the Hong—a proposal that seems judicious, but which, from want of unanimity, was not fully adopted.

The Chinese merchants, by themselves proposing the suspension of the trade, obviated the suspicion of collusion, which probably induced the government to lay upon them so heavy a load of responsibility. In an elaborate mandate, issued by Governor Loo, their conduct is declared to be most highly praiseworthy, "manifesting a profound knowledge of the great principles of dignity." Yet he does not proceed

immediately to take the strong step recommended. He pretends, indeed, that the trade, and the duties arising from it, "do not concern the Celestial Empire to the extent of a hair, or a feather's down." But, knowing the divine wish of his great master to cherish both those within and those without, he was unwilling to involve thousands of the latter in ruin for the disobedience and obstinacy of one individual. He therefore allowed a short interval, that the barbarian eye, said to be "a man of very solid and expansive mind, and placid speech," might have an opportunity to reconsider his rash decision.

An occasion was thus afforded to terminate amicably this alarming dissension; yet the period from the 16th August to the 2d September elapsed without the proposals being accepted, or any counter-proposition made. At the last date, the threatened measure was resorted to,—an order being issued for the entire suspension of the trade, with a retrospective effect to the 16th August. So complete was the prohibition, that fresh provisions could no longer be procured, and Lord Napier and his suite were obliged to live on salt meat conveyed from the ships of war.

Affairs having thus come to an extremity, the superintendent determined to make one of those demonstrations which had often succeeded in overawing the native authorities. Directions were given that his majesty's armed ships, Imogene and Andromache, which had been brought to the outside of the Bogue, should force their way through that channel and approach the city. Captain Blackwood accordingly began this movement on the 7th, when the forts by which the entrance was defended immediately began firing blank-cartridge, which was speedily followed by shot. As soon as the balls

fell near the British vessels the fire was returned, and the contest was continued for an hour and three-quarters, the time occupied in the winding passage of the channel. The state of the wind then obliged the British to anchor till the 9th, when they again proceeded to pass Tiger Island, where the Chinese had a strong battery, which they had been diligently fortifying. Thence a very brisk fire was opened, which, however, did not prevent the ships from forcing their way up, though, as the wind failed, they once more found it necessary to anchor below the second bar. The fire from the forts, during this enterprise, is said to have been kept up with some spirit, but very ill directed. The vessels sustained a slight damage, and on board of each one man was killed and three wounded. The loss on the other side could not be ascertained; but the continued and well-directed fire of the British must have caused very considerable injury to several of the forts.

The impression made by this transaction was announced in a fresh order issued on the 11th by the governor. It did not correspond with the sanguine expectations which had been cherished. All the former demands were repeated; the conduct of Lord Napier was severely stigmatized in regard to the whole affair, and especially the employment of ships of war to attack their forts and wound their people. Yet the door of reconciliation was not entirely closed; it was intimated, that if he would repent of his errors, and even now obey the laws of the empire, indulgence would still be extended to him.

A very considerable ferment appears by this time to have arisen among the mercantile classes at Canton; some insisting that perseverance would still induce the natives to yield, while others viewed with

alarm the ruin in which they would be involved by the termination of the trade. The Parsee merchants, not animated by British feelings, were strongly impressed with these apprehensions. They presented an address to the superintendent, stating that they had hailed with satisfaction his lordship's arrival, and had studiously avoided opposing any obstacle to his measures, trusting that the threatened stoppage of the trade was an expedient employed by the Chinese to gain their ends, but which, as on former occasions, they would recede from when vigorously resisted. Now, however, when there appeared no hope of early adjustment, they could not but point out the dreadful consequences which impended; adding, "We cannot sit down quietly and see certain ruin coming both to ourselves and to others who have intrusted their property to our care; we therefore beseech your lordship to devise some measures for relieving us from this most perilous situation." They afterwards informed him, that Hou-qua, the senior Hong-merchant, had said no accommodation could take place until Lord Napier's departure, and that otherwise even their lives were in danger; at the same time he offered a chop, enabling them to leave the city. The nobleman treated this threat with derision, and exhorted them to remain under British protection till the affair should be decided. The Chinese, however, were omitting no exertion to render their menaces effective. A barrier of spars was formed across the river, while in another place the passage was blocked up by piles and sunken junks. Rafts were brought to the front of the factory, troops were collected, and an attempt was made, though vainly, to introduce 2000 soldiers

into Macao. Lord Napier's difficulties were increased by severe indisposition, caused by toil and anxiety. Under these circumstances, he shrunk from the calamities which would ensue from the continued suspension of intercourse; and on the 14th, he announced his determination to yield, and to quit Canton. The ships of war also, on the demand of the native government, were ordered to move out to Lintin. It was at first intended to bring up a British cutter for his lordship; but, by arrangements afterwards made with the Hong-merchants, two chop-boats were provided, in which he embarked on the evening of the 21st. Although there had been a full understanding that he should be conveyed in a commodious manner, suited to his dignity, and with the utmost possible despatch, it was soon discovered that they were under the convoy of several armed boats, which proceeded so very slowly that they anchored for the night still in sight of the town. They reached Heang-shan on the 23d, at midnight, but were there detained for nearly two days, amid a tremendous beating of gongs, noise, and confusion, which severely aggravated his illness. It was not till after the most urgent representations, that Mr Colledge, the surgeon, obtained a pass to proceed; nor did they reach Macao till the 28th. His lordship's weakness, however, which, at his departure, was so great that he required to be assisted into the boat, had increased so much, that the attentions of his family and medical attendants were of no avail, and he expired on the 11th October. The functions of superintendent then devolved on Mr Davis.

The Chinese authorities, according to custom,

transmitted to court a boastful account of this transaction; representing Lord Napier as having been admitted to mercy only after the most humble submission, and then ignominiously driven out of Canton. As it had, however, been previously necessary to intimate the fact of the ships having forced their way up the river in defiance of the forts, that proud government, unwilling to own its weakness, threw the whole blame on the officers employed. In the "vermilion-coloured reply," it was said,—"It seems that all the forts are erected in vain; they cannot beat back two barbarian ships; it is ridiculous, detestable. The military preparations being reduced to such a state as this, it is not surprising that the outside barbarians regard them slightingly." By a mandate from the tribunal of war, the naval officer immediately in command was degraded, and condemned to wear the cangue, or wooden pillory, in public at the maritime entrance. All the officers on duty at the forts were to carry the same disgraceful badge. Le, the naval commander-in-chief, had, by gross negligence, shown himself wholly unworthy of employment, and was therefore deprived of it. Even Governor Loo must have his two-eyed peacock's feather plucked out, and lose some of his titles; but, as he had announced certain active measures as now in operation for expelling the barbarians, he was allowed to retain the command, with injunctions to carry his plan into effect.

The departure of Lord Napier was immediately followed by the re-opening of the trade, which took place on the 27th September; and we presume there is no intention on the part of our government to interrupt it again by measures of hostility or intimi-

dation. Still, among the British merchants at Canton, an opinion in favour of such an expedient generally prevails. In a petition to the king in council, signed by eighty-five of their number, it is earnestly recommended, that a ship of the line, two frigates, and some smaller vessels, should be despatched to the eastern coast, as near to the capital as possible, to demand satisfaction for the insults offered to the noble superintendent, as well as for the losses sustained by our commerce, and endeavour to procure a renewal of the liberty to trade at Amoy, Tchu-san, and Ning-po. This force, it is stated, would be sufficient to put a stop to the greater part of the trade of the empire, to capture its armed vessels, and intercept the revenue in its progress to the treasury. They are therefore of opinion, that such an armament would extort from the imperial government all the privileges demanded, without any risk of involving the two nations in war. Though every respect is due to the local knowledge of the petitioners, we doubt whether mercantile residents, stung by recent insults and disappointments, could be duly qualified to estimate all the political results of so momentous a step. We do not ourselves see any ground to alter the opinion already expressed against the expediency of attempting to open a trade by violent and hostile measures.

END OF VOLUME SECOND.

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